

17 February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

## COVID-19 asymptomatic testing programme

I am writing to let you know about the new **Asymptomatic Testing Programme** for schools, which is being put in place by the Scottish Government as part of the package of COVID-19 risk reduction mitigation measures in schools across the country, and to give you more information about how the programme will operate in our schools.

Along with the other protective measures to keep our school communities safe, regular testing of staff and senior phase pupils will help to further reduce risks for staff and young people in our school.

The testing will help to identify asymptomatic individuals in school environments at the earliest possible opportunity. They and their close contacts will be asked to self-isolate to minimise the likelihood of passing on the virus.

### Who can take part?

The regular testing is open to all **school staff and senior phase pupils who are regularly attending the school premises**. The testing programme also includes **childcare staff and early learning and childcare staff** in settings that are attached to schools.

### Does everyone have to take part?

Testing is voluntary. No-one who is otherwise permitted to come to school will be prevented from doing so just because they do not wish to participate. However, we are strongly encouraging participation from all those who are attending school, in order to prevent the spread of the virus in our school communities.

If you choose to participate in testing, you will be asked to complete a consent form and review the privacy notice for this programme.

However, staff or pupils, who are working or learning from home, are not asked to participate. This is because the programme is intended specifically to reduce risks in the school environment.

**Please note:** If someone has had a confirmed Covid infection by a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test, they should not take part in twice weekly Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests for 90 days from the date of their original PCR test.

## What will the testing involve?

Our schools are being provided with a supply of Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test kits by the Scottish Government and the UK Department of Health and Social Care for use at home. We will give each participating staff member or senior pupils in Secondary, a supply of these test kits to take home, together with the instructions.

We will then ask individuals to test regularly at home, twice a week (every three to four days, ideally in the morning before school).

**Negative tests:** A negative test result does not mean you can ignore physical distancing or other measures intended to reduce transmission – testing is an additional intervention that contributes to reducing risk.

**If you have symptoms:** It is important to note that this regular testing is only for individuals without symptoms. Those with symptoms must continue to follow the usual guidance. They must not attend school. They must self-isolate and book a PCR test at a test centre or via a home test kit at the earliest opportunity, even if you have a negative result from the LFD test.

## What happens next?

We intend to start distributing test kits to staff who are attending schools in the week commencing 15 February.

We will distribute test kits to those senior phase pupils who wish to participate as early as possible for the return to school. They will then be asked to begin testing as soon as possible.

We will continue to support and communicate with our staff, pupils and school communities as we implement this programme. We are currently waiting for revised support materials from the Scottish Government and will issue these to staff and senior pupils as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,



Nicky Grant  
Executive Chief Officer Education & Learning