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Dear Parent / Guardian

## **COVID-19 asymptomatic (no symptoms) testing programme for school/nursery staff and senior phase pupils**

I am writing to let you know about the new Schools/ and Nursery Asymptomatic Testing Programme, which is being put in place across Scotland as part of the package of COVID-19 risk reduction mitigations in schools, and to give you more information about how the programme will operate in Renfrewshire.

I am also requesting that, as a parent or guardian of a senior phase pupil (ie S4-S6) who is eligible for testing, you discuss this letter and the attached privacy notice with them. If you and they are content, please ensure that the attached consent form is completed and returned at the earliest opportunity. This will ensure your child can participate in testing if he or she wishes to do so.

### **Why are we participating in the programme?**

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

It will help to identify asymptomatic individuals (those with no symptoms) in schools at the earliest possible opportunity. Anyone who tests positive and their close contacts will be asked to self-isolate, which will minimise the likelihood of them passing on the virus.

### **Who can take part?**

The regular testing is open to all school staff and senior phase pupils who regularly attend any school. The testing programme also includes school-aged childcare staff and nursery staff in centres and classes that are attached to schools. References to 'school staff' within this letter includes this wider group of nursery and childcare staff.

### **Does everyone have to take part?**

Testing is voluntary. Staff and secondary school pupils who decide that they do not wish to participate in this programme will still be able to attend school. However, we are strongly encouraging all school staff and senior phase pupils who are attending school to participate wherever possible, in order to contribute to the wellbeing of our school community.

Staff or pupils who are working or learning from home should not participate - the programme is intended specifically to reduce risks in the school environment.

### **What will the testing involve?**

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 and senior phase pupil a supply of these test kits to take home, together with the 'Instructions for Use'. Each staff member and senior phase pupil will be required to sign for these in a log at the point of handover.

We will then ask individuals to test regularly at home, twice a week on Monday and Thursday before coming to school.

The tests do not require laboratory processing and can provide a quick result in around 30 minutes. Comprehensive guidance on self-testing is contained in the 'Instructions for Use' leaflet which will be provided with the test kit. There is a useful video showing participants how to administer the test here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvaBZskxS7tzQYIVg7lwH5uxAD9UrSzGJ>.

Once the test has been conducted individuals must log the test result – whether positive, negative or void – online at [www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result](http://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result). Tests are free of charge and will be provided by the school.

Regular testing is only for individuals without symptoms. Those with symptoms must continue to follow the usual guidance. They must self-isolate and book a PCR test at a test centre or via a home test kit at the earliest opportunity. People with symptoms must not rely on a negative LFD result to continue to attend school.

A negative test result must not be taken as leave to relax or ignore physical distancing or other measures intended to reduce transmission – testing is an additional intervention that contributes to reducing risk.

### **What happens next?**

Please discuss this letter and the privacy notice with your child. If your child wishes to participate in testing, and you are content for them to do so, please ensure that the attached consent form is completed and returned at the earliest opportunity.

We intend to start distributing test kits to staff and senior phase pupils in week commencing Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February.

We will continue to support and communicate with staff, pupils and school communities as we implement this programme. Please let us know if you have any questions. In the meantime, some Frequently Asked Questions can be found in the annex to this letter.

Yours sincerely

Gordon McKinlay  
Head of Schools

## Annex – Frequently Asked Questions

### How will my child know how to use the tests?

The school will provide those participating with the most up to date Instructions for Use along with their test kits. Participants will be asked to ensure they use these, and not the ones that are pre-packaged in the test kits.

The Instructions for Use set out clearly how to use the test kits, or how to support someone to do so. They also provide a number to call if there are any problems with the test kits.

### Are the tests safe and accurate?

LFD tests have been widely and successfully used to detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals. No test is perfect, but the speed and convenience of LFD tests supports detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals who would not otherwise be tested. They are clinically approved and are crucial in the fight against the virus. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has approved the use of these at-home tests for these purposes.

LFD tests are very accurate, which means that only a very small proportion of people who do not have coronavirus will receive a positive result (false positive). The tests are better at picking up true positive cases when a person has a higher viral load and is more contagious. There is a risk of returning a false negative result when viral loads are low (e.g. in the early stages of infection). This is why Public Health Scotland recommend two LFD tests 3 to 4 days apart, or regular testing, to enhance detection by picking up any cases which were not detected during the first test and to catch any new infections.

If someone tests positive using an LFD, it is likely that they are infectious at that moment, whereas people testing positive on a 'Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR)' test could be in the less infectious early or late stages of disease. This means that by using the LFD, we can identify people with a high viral load who are the most likely to spread the virus further.

### What happens if there is a problem with the tests?

Any incidents that could potentially impact the quality or safety of testing should be reported to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

For incidents occurring in a home setting, please report any issues (for example: something damaged, or missing or difficult to use in the kit, you are unable to log a result) to **0300 303 2713**.

If there is a clinical incident which led to, or has the potential for, harm (e.g. swab breaks in the mouth, bleeding, allergic reaction on using the kit etc.) please report it on <https://coronavirusyellowcard.mhra.gov.uk>.

This is not for seeking immediate medical care. Medical care should be sought through the usual route of contacting 111 or 999.

## **What happens if my child tests positive?**

If your child receives a positive result on your Lateral Flow Device at home, they must report the result online at [www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result](https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result), self-isolate and book a confirmatory PCR test. This can be done via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. We advise visiting a community or drive-through test site as this is the quickest way to get tested, or you can order a home test kit.

It is important that your child begins self-isolation immediately after they receive the positive result from the LFD test, and does not wait until the result of their PCR test.

## **What happens if my child tests negative?**

They must report the result online at [www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result](https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result). Individuals who test negative will be able to stay in schools and resume their activities as normal.

## **What happens if the test result is “void”?**

This means the test has not run correctly. Your child must report the result online at [www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result](https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result). They will need to take another test. Use a new test kit, and do not reuse anything from the first kit.

## **What if my child has been in close contact with someone who tests positive?**

If a pupil or member of staff has tested positive, they will have to self-isolate as per government guidelines. The pupil or member of staff should also inform the school of their absence, and are strongly encouraged to report a positive case to their school to support contact tracing activities.

Both Test and Protect and, once informed, the school will get in contact with staff members and pupils who were in close contact with a positive case to inform them that they need to self-isolate.

## **What if my child develops symptoms?**

This testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 0800 028 2816 or visiting <https://www.nhsinform.scot/>. People with symptoms must not rely on a negative LFD result to continue to attend school.

## **Can staff/pupils' families get tested too?**

No, this asymptomatic LFD testing is aimed at staff and senior phase pupils only. The tests will be handed to staff and senior phase pupils for personal use and should not be used for anyone else. Family members of staff or senior phase pupils taking part are not eligible.

If family members experience COVID-19 symptoms, they must follow standard Government guidance, including self-isolating immediately and booking a test through the NHS Coronavirus (COVID-19) service or by calling 0300 303 2713 in Scotland.