



Tuesday, 20 April 2021

Dear parent or carer,

We have been asked to pass on this information from Southampton City Council regarding symptom free (lateral flow) Covid-19 tests. Please note that the symptom- free lateral flow cannot be used to test for Covid-19 when symptoms are present. If you or your child have symptoms or Covid-19 you should self-isolate and have a PCR test. [Please click here](#) to view letter 26 on our school website for more information.

Symptom-free COVID-19 testing in Southampton for households, support bubbles and childcare bubble with children in school

As the new term begins, we would like to strongly encourage you to continue to use symptom-free testing and play a part in helping to reduce transmission of COVID 19.

Symptom-free testing played a key role prior to Easter in helping to break chains of transmission and reduce infections following the return of pupils to schools, according to our data. Symptom-free tests **detected nearly half the confirmed COVID cases in education settings between 8 March, when the majority of pupils returned to schools for in person learning, and the end of term on 1 April.**

Early detection of COVID-19 infections, which may otherwise have gone undetected, meant that early action could be taken by individuals to self-isolate and break chains of transmission at an early stage.

Rapid symptom-free tests are now available to everyone in England, and we encourage everyone to test twice a week, particularly anyone who has sustained contact with school and college-aged children and early years children. This includes all households with children, members of support bubbles, childcare bubbles, and people working in childcare and in any related occupations.

As you may be aware our pupils will not be asked to test at this time as primary school pupils are not being tested.

Although COVID-19 cases are falling across the city, we still need to do everything we can to bring them down further to keep ourselves, our families and our colleagues safe, especially as we move out of lockdown. **One in three people with COVID-19 don't have symptoms**, so people could be spreading the infection without realising it. It is really important that we identify those people so that they can self-isolate and break the chain of transmission. The more people we find who have the virus and then self-isolate, the more quickly we will be able to return to a more normal way of life for everyone.

How to get tested

Schools are not currently able to give test kits to parents, carers or household members. However, the options for accessing a symptom-free test have expanded significantly in recent weeks and getting a test has never been easier. They can now be organised via any of the following options:

1. You can [book appointments](#) to be tested at **Southampton's symptom-free testing sites, including participating community pharmacies**. Testing at these sites is assisted, which means you will swab yourself under the supervision of a trained operator. We recommend having at least one test at a symptom-free testing site so that you can be supported to carry out the test well. Tests that are completed well are more likely to pick up any COVID-19 infection present.
2. You can use the **Community Collect scheme to collect home lateral flow testing kits from local testing sites, community pharmacies, West Quay and many other locations across the city**. No booking is required. **The testing kits you pick up will contain instructions on how to take the tests and register the results via the online registration portal**. Additional collection sites are being added every week, check for the most up to date locations [Find your nearest rapid lateral flow test site](#).
3. By [ordering home test kits online](#) **Please do not order online if you can get a test through other methods. This frees up home delivery for those who need it most.**
4. You may be able to access symptom-free testing through your **employer's testing scheme**, if one is available.

Do not attend your test appointment or visit any of the testing sites to collect kits if you develop coronavirus symptoms or are self-isolating. If you have COVID-19 symptoms you must not use the symptom-free testing and you should [book a symptomatic test](#) in the usual way.

If anyone tests positive or gets coronavirus symptoms, they should tell the school and:

- self-isolate immediately, along with their household
- get a PCR test as soon as possible to confirm the result
- follow the [stay at home guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#)

A negative result means the test did not find signs of coronavirus. But this does not guarantee you do not have coronavirus, so you should keep following all [coronavirus advice](#) including:

- regular handwashing
- social distancing
- wearing a face covering where recommended

There is also more national [guidance](#) and [local information](#) here on who can be tested and how you can get a test.

Please do not contact the school regarding household testing as the school will not be able to provide any further information than we have shared above.

With best wishes, and my thanks for all you have done and keep doing to keep your families and Southampton residents safe,

Yours sincerely

The Office Team

