Department for Education

Covid-19 Asymptomatic Testing in Schools and Further Education Providers

How to encourage pupils and students to test regularly

Introduction

It is critical that your students continue to test on a regular basis as part of the asymptomatic testing programme. Testing means we will:

- identify and isolate those who are asymptomatic

- reduce transmission

- keep our schools and colleges covid-secure.

In this toolkit we share strategies that have been successfully used by school leaders and further education providers to increase testing participation.

You know what works for you, your staff and students; we hope you find these ideas a useful starting point.

This toolkit considers:

Communications

Data

Reporting results

Engagement

Incentives

Additional resources

Self-isolation support

Communications

Communications.

Tried and tested approaches:

- Send automatic reminders to test via text message or email. The gov.uk notify service allows schools – to do this quickly and cheaply.

- Create a trigger point that embeds testing as part of a students' routines, e.g. establish a day on which everyone should test such as 'Testing Mondays' and send reminders the evening or morning before.

- Include key messages about the purpose of testing and remind students of the importance of reporting all results to the NHS and education setting.

- Use messages directly from school leaders, student leaders, teachers and tutors - engaging through trusted sources and making it personal.

- Use different methods to communicate, e.g. your online portal, phone calls, videos or peer to peer messaging.

- Use positive language – for example, thank students for their ongoing support with covid measures - and avoid labelling students as non-compliant.

- Translate key information into relevant languages. On Gov.uk there is guidance on how to take and report tests at home translated into multiple languages.

- Using these resources will help families fully engage with regular testing.

Data

Be data driven

- Understand the testing data for your school or college.

- You have access to your testing data via the [education data rapid testing dashboard](#)

- The data shows positive, negative and void test results reported for your school or further education provider. The data is comprised of results for staff or students, who have tested via ATS or at home

- You should use this regularly to understand your testing position, benchmark against national testing data and compare to your own soft intelligence

- If a result is registered incorrectly or not properly tied to your setting by a student, it will not feature in your data or will generate a null result. It is important that students understand [how to correctly register their test results](#)

Report test results

Report test results

- All pupils, students and staff should <u>report their test results.</u>

- By reporting test results every time a test is taken, the NHS always gets the latest, most accurate information which helps keep track of where the virus is spreading, provide support where its needed, and help keep your school open.

- Keep a log of which students are testing and collecting their testing kits and remind them (and their parents) to test and report.

- **Take action:** send targeted emails and call their parents to remind pupils to test if you notice some are not regularly testing using the '<u>Notify website</u>'.

Engagement

Click to add text

Student engagement and peer leaders

> Evidence shows that when individuals tell someone they are going to do something, they are more likely to do it.

You could secure this 'pre-commitment' by having teachers or tutors ask students in class "who will do a test on Thursday morning? How will you remember/build it into your morning routine?".

Ideas that have worked to involve your student leadership team:

- Involve your student representatives, clubs and societies in passing on key information about testing e.g. through recording a video.

- Encourage peer to peer conversations e.g. tackling 'testing myths'.

- Get feedback regularly and evaluate with student representatives or the Student Union – how would they improve student engagement in testing?

- Co-create interventions and communications materials with students.

Newcastle College student video

Durham University student video

Parental engagement

- Parents are key to getting students testing regularly

Some things to think about:

- Communicate via channels other than letters or emails which time-poor parents may miss e.g. use parents evenings, texts etc.

- Engage the wider community – are there other trusted local voices, such as religious, youth or community leaders, that could be involved in your drive to increase testing uptake?

- Using translated resources may help families within your community fully engage with regular testing.

- Your Local Authority may be delivering a community engagement programme that you could be part of.

Guide to regular testing for parents

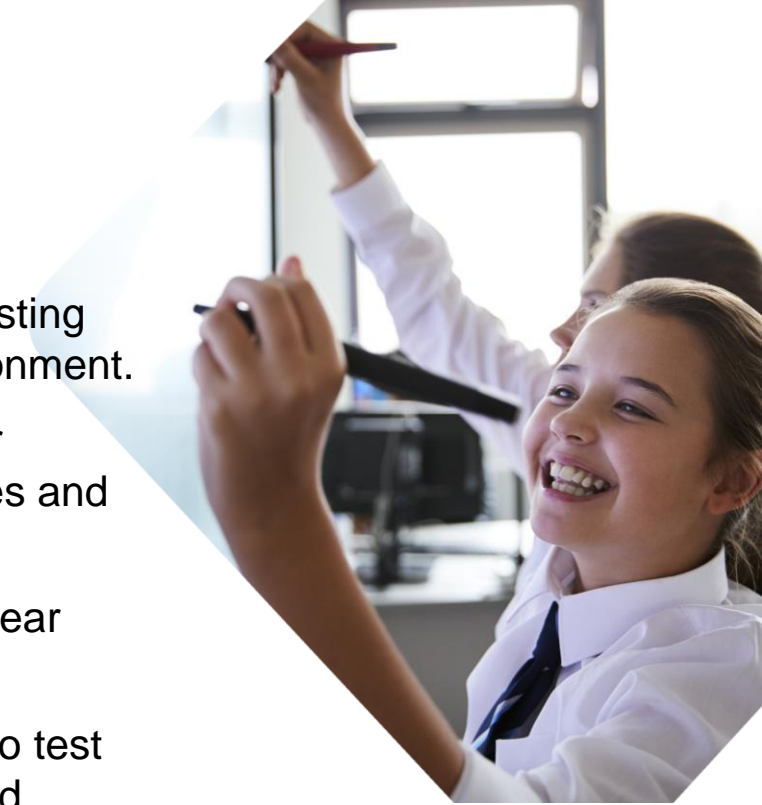**Letter to parents on the importance of home testing**

Incentives

Incentivise students to participate

Ideas that have worked:

- Emphasise shared community benefits of regular testing within education settings, e.g. creating a safe environment.

- Promote testing with visual prompts, e.g. signage or posters at the entrance to key areas such as libraries and sports facilities.

- Share test data and create a competition between year groups or courses.

- Use existing reward schemes to motivate students to test regularly, e.g. extra stamps on a canteen loyalty card.

- Enter students into a prize draw if they register a test result.

- Consider low and no-cost incentives, e.g. non-uniform day.

- Use social media, e.g. use a pledge sticker 'I've had my test', or a profile picture frame 'I got my test'.

Evidence shows that if people can see that everyone else is doing something, they are more likely to do it themselves.

Self-isolation support

Supporting students through self-isolation

We know that the fear of having to self-isolate is a barrier for many young people when they are considering whether or not to test.

If pupils/students need to self-isolate because they have a positive test result:

- Tell them in advance what plans are in place to allow them to continue to access education.

- Seek feedback from students and adapt your remote provision.

- Signpost to mental health and wellbeing support and 'check-in' on students regularly to identify further support needs e.g. via video call.

- Assign a student 'buddy' to support those who are self-isolating with their school or college work.

- Use technology to give inclusive access to your setting even from home – including extra-curricular and social activities.

- Signpost parents to the financial support available if they need to be absent from work in order to care for a child or young person who needs to self-isolate.

Additional Resources

Testing and Participation Resources

Links to useful resources on how to test correctly can be found below:

GOV.UK guidance on how to test yourself for COVID-19 (this link also includes translated resources)

Explainer videos for rapid flow tests translated into different languages

YouTube video featuring Dr Amir Khan showing how to test yourself for COVID-19

We have produced a range of social media graphics to encourage testing

There is also folder full of testing resources to help schools encourage participation and reporting of regular home testing. This includes FAQs, letter templates, training, leaflets and posters

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Contact us
The coronavirus helpline: 0800 046 8687

Visit the website
http://www.education.gov.uk/