

COVID-19 National Testing Programme:

# ‘Why, Who, What and When’

# Rapid Testing for Secondary Schools and Colleges in March 2021



**24 Feb 2021 RP60-1** *This has been developed by the Department for Education and currently applies to **England only**. Further guidance will be developed by the devolved governments.*

# This document and other guidance available

1



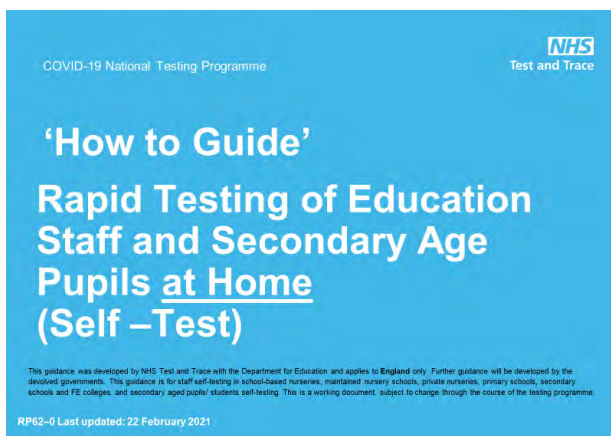
This document (the orange guide) provides an overview of the testing journey for secondary schools and colleges from March 2021 onwards.

2



This green guide sets out how to set up an Asymptomatic Test Site (ATS) in your secondary school or college. This is required for when your pupils or students first return.

3



This blue guide sets out how to enable your staff to test at home. Once your pupils and students have tested 3 times on-site (ATS), this guide will also be applicable for moving your pupils or students to test at home kits.

# Table of contents

- **Why carry out asymptomatic testing?**
- **Who should test?**
- **What testing is required?**
- **Key Questions**
- **When should testing happen?**
- **When will you receive test kits?**
- **Key dates**
- **Consent for testing**
- **Delivery details**
- **Workforce and Funding**
- **Consideration for SEND**
- **Additional questions you may have**
- **Further Guidance**

# Why do asymptomatic testing?

We must use all of the tools available to us to combat the transmission of COVID-19. These tools range from vaccination, symptomatic testing, improving medicines, self-isolation regulations and non pharmaceutical interventions like hands-face-space.

**Asymptomatic testing is a further and critical tool to help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19.**

On its own Asymptomatic testing will not prevent the transmission of COVID-19 but used with the other tools available (to us) it will help us to:

- 1** Identify and help to prevent staff, students and pupils without symptoms from transmitting and spreading the virus unknowingly.
- 2** Allow schools and colleges to operate as safely as possible by self-isolating those that are the most contagious as soon as is practical.

Asymptomatic testing is done via simple and quick tests, known as Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests. They enable us to rapidly test pupils, students and staff, without the need for a laboratory. No test is 100% accurate, but the LFD, when done as part of a testing regime is very good at picking up those with high viral loads (i.e. those that are the most contagious).

**We are asking the sector to help us break the chains of transmission by encouraging as many of your staff, students and pupils to test on a regular basis as is practically possible.**

**!** This asymptomatic testing programme does not replace current guidance for those with symptoms or those identified as a close contact of a positive case. Anyone with symptoms, whether they are involved in this programme or not, should book [a free NHS test](#) and follow government self-isolation guidance until the results of their test are known. Testing also does not replace basic preventative measures such as regular handwashing, PPE and social distancing.

**Lateral Flow Testing**

- COVID testing
- Accessible and easy to use
- No lab required, with fast results
- Safe technology

**HANDS** **FACE** **SPACE**

# Who should be tested?

In collaboration, DfE and DHSC have determined, what is believed to be the most appropriate way of testing the Secondary School and College sector safely while also allowing them to return to face to face education. This includes carefully balancing the public health case for who should be tested and how they should be tested i.e. via a controlled test site (ATS) or using test at home kits.

We would like the following people to take part in testing:

- ✓ All staff working in Secondary Schools and Colleges. This means any adult working on the school or college site
- ✓ All secondary age pupils. This means Year 7 and upwards. This applies to 11 year olds that are due to turn 12 in the course of the academic year and also includes adult learners attending college (19+).
- ✗ There is no need for primary age pupils to be tested (i.e. those in Year 6 and below).



This asymptomatic testing programme does not replace current guidance for those with symptoms or those identified as a close contact of a positive case. Anyone with symptoms, whether they are involved in this programme or not, should book [a free NHS test](#) and follow government self-isolation guidance until the results of their test are known. Testing also does not replace basic preventative measures such as regular handwashing, PPE and social distancing.



# What testing is required?

1

## **Continue to carry out twice weekly testing of school and college staff.**

**Home test kits** for staff should become available from 25 February and all staff should be using them by 8 March 2021. You can start using them as soon as they have arrived and you have set up a collection process to record who you have issued them to. A positive confirmatory PCR will be required for all positive cases.

Whilst you await your delivery of test at home kits staff should continue to be offered twice weekly testing on-site (ATS) at your school/college location.

2

## **Test secondary age pupils/students (11+ to 19+) on their initial return to school and FE colleges on site a minimum of three times, three to five days apart using your Asymptomatic Testing Site**

When returning to their school or college, pupils and students will be offered three Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests spaced three to five days apart (minimum three days). This is so students have undertaken some testing in a supervised setting, and have had the chance to familiarise themselves with self-swabbing.

3

## **Transition to test at home - once pupils and students have been tested three times at school or college, they will be provided with home test kits for regular twice weekly testing at home.**

When returning to their school or college, pupils and students will be offered three Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests spaced three to five days apart (minimum three days). Following the three initial tests, pupils and students can collect their test at home kits and start testing at home on a regular basis.

4

## **Continue and maintain a small Asymptomatic Test Site at your school or college**

Schools and colleges should retain a small ATS (1 to 3 bays, depending on the size of the school/college) on site so they can offer testing to students who are unable to test themselves at home or would prefer to test on-site. Further information about funding available to support this is given in this slide pack.

# Key Questions



## Do I have to test?

Testing is voluntary and individuals should be allowed to attend school or college even if they decide not to take part in testing. However, we would like to encourage everyone to join in the asymptomatic testing programme to help break transmission links by identifying those that may be carrying the virus unknowingly.



Anyone with symptoms, whether they are involved in this programme or not, should book [a free NHS test](#) and follow government self-isolation guidance until the results of their test are known.



## What age pupils should I test?

Children aged 11 and above attending a secondary school or college should be tested. This includes 19+ learners attending college.



## Why can't we start test at home and stop using our Asymptomatic Test Sites?

It is important that initially pupils and students are supervised whilst swabbing to make sure they are doing it correctly. This is why testing will initially take place on-site (via ATS). As a result, secondary schools and colleges should offer students three tests on-site, three to five days apart, upon their return. Testing on-site (via an ATS) initially is a condition of being able to transition pupils and students to test at home.



## Can pupils and students swab themselves?

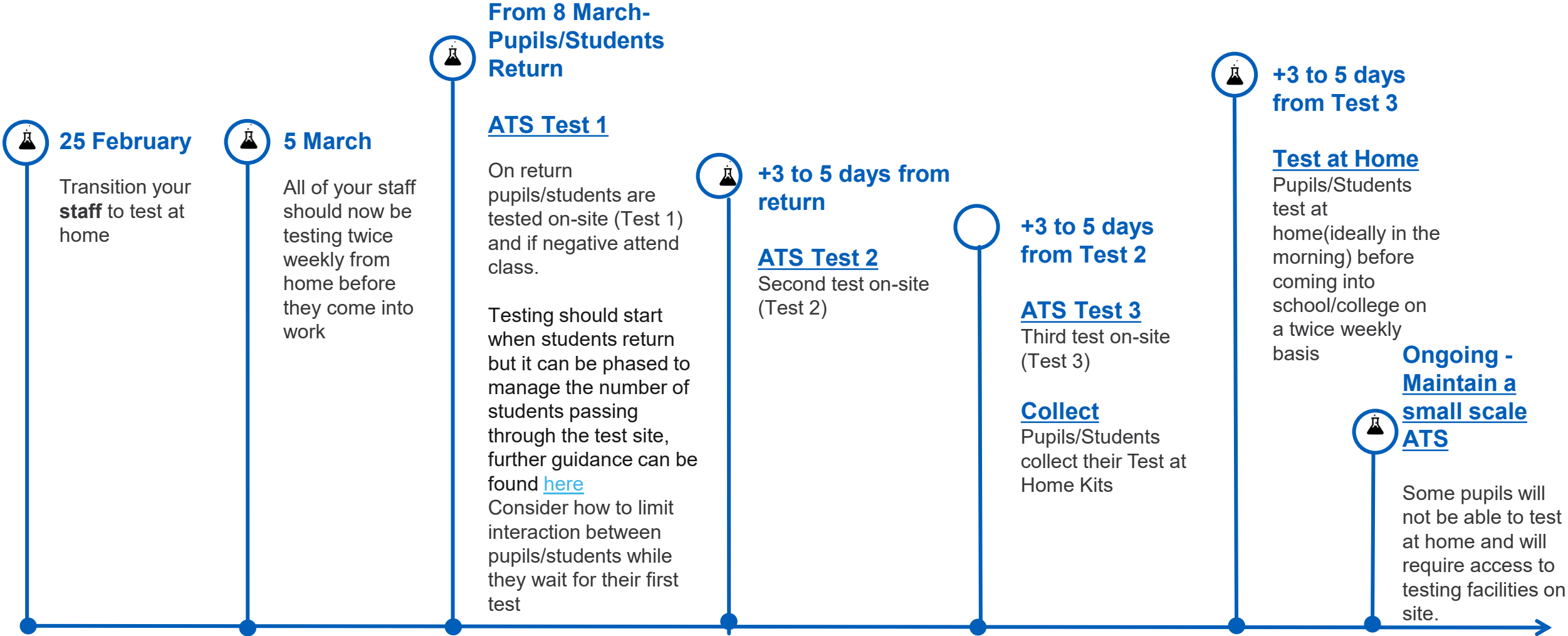
Yes, in an Asymptomatic Testing Site all pupils 11 and above, can swab themselves if they are able to. Please see slide 15 for considerations for those with SEND. When testing at home, Students aged 18 and over should self-test and report the result, with assistance if needed. Pupils aged 12-17 should self-test and report with adult supervision. The adult may conduct the test if necessary. When testing at home children aged 11 (who attend a secondary school) should be tested/swabbed by an adult.



## Do I need to order test kits?

You will automatically receive test kits (both ATS and test at home). Please see slide 12 for more details.

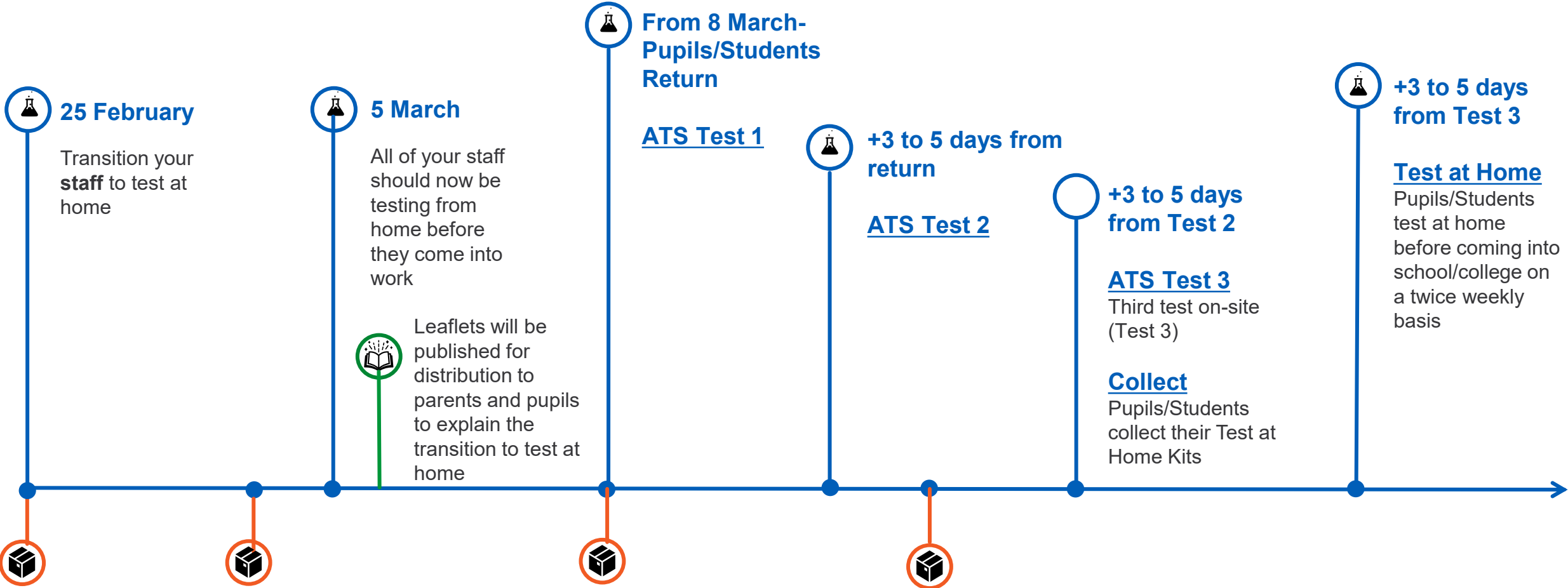
# When should testing happen?



**!** It is very important that initially pupils and students are supervised whilst swabbing to make sure they are doing it correctly. This is why testing will initially take place on-site (ATS). As a result, secondary schools and colleges should offer students three tests on-site, three to five days apart, upon their return.



# When will you receive test kits?



**24 February**

You will start receiving deliveries of Test at Home kits for your staff (N.B. There is no need to order them). Deliveries will be made between 24 February and 2 March.

**1 March\***

You will automatically receive a re-stock of ATS kits (N.B. There is no need to order them). Deliveries will be between 1 March and 5 March

**8 March**

You will automatically receive a re-stock of Test at Home Kits so your students/pupils can collect them after Test 3. (N.B. There is no need to order them). Deliveries will be between 8 March and 15 March

**15 March onwards →**

Please use the reordering process to receive more test stock

\* In some cases, where delivery schedules and supply allow, schools will receive a single delivery of both types of kit from 24 February. The different types of kit will be clearly labelled

# Key Dates

- Monday 22 Feb** An improvement to how you can register pupils/students on the digital reporting system will be launched
- Tuesday 23 Feb** Guidance is published on the schools and colleges document sharing platform and covers testing at home for your staff and managing testing on return for your pupils and students
- Wednesday 24 Feb** Webinar to explain how the testing journey works with schools re-opening  
Deliveries of Test at Home Kits for staff will start arriving
- Thursday 25 Feb** Your staff can start using Test at Home kits on a regular basis to test twice a week
- Monday 1 Mar** Deliveries of additional ATS Test kits will start arriving, to ensure you have plenty of kits in advance of the majority of pupils and students resuming face to face education.
- Friday 5 Mar** Literature suitable for parents/carers and pupils is made available, explaining the transition from on-site testing to test at home for pupils and students
- Monday 8 Mar** Test at Home kits for your pupils and students start arriving
- Friday 5 Mar** Additional webinar for schools and colleges with an increased focus on test at home for pupils/students

# Consent for testing

- You should have got consent from your staff and pupils for testing via Asymptomatic Test Sites in January when you set your ATS up. If you haven't set up your ATS or sought consent please refer to the [How to Guide for setting up an ATS - Green Guide](#) Via that guide you can access templates for asking for consent and issuing privacy notices. If you asked for consent in January for testing on-site (via ATS) and have a record of it, you do not need to ask again.
- When your staff transition to test at home from 25 February, and then your pupils and students transition after their third ATS test, they will give consent for their data to be used in a slightly different way to the on-site (ATS) consent. Test at home does not require written medical consent, consent is given by completing the test. Please make sure that when staff, pupils and students transition to test at home they understand they do not give written consent for this and ensure they are issued with the privacy notice for test at home. The way you should do this is set out in [How To Guide for Testing at Home.- Blue Guide](#)
- **N.B.** By collecting and opening the test at home test kits the individual gives medical consent and is legally committed to reporting their results via the NHS Test and Trace reporting system. There is no need to specifically ask for medical consent for test at home.

# Details on deliveries

You will receive **three deliveries** in the time scales set out below. Your exact delivery timescales are shown in the [delivery schedule](#).

- You will need to consider where to store your test kits when they arrive. The test kits should be kept at a temperature of between approximately 2°C and 30°C and in a secure place to prevent authorised access.
- If your testing kit does not arrive - first check the delivery schedule and review the delivery status. If this does not resolve your issue, or your delivery is damaged please contact DfE via the [contact us form](#)
- You may receive deliveries 1 and 2 together. If this is the case the delivery note that accompanies each delivery will describe which type of tests are included, to help avoid mixing them up.

## Delivery 1 – 24 February to 2 March – LFD self test kits (Test at Home) for Secondary and College staff

This delivery will contain a number of boxes marked NHS Test and Trace (Figure 1). The number of boxes you receive will be based on the number of staff you have. Each box (Figure 1) contains a total of 378 tests. That is 54 smaller individual boxes of 7 test kits. Each staff member should be given a single box of 7 as shown by the Figure 3. The boxes will also be accompanied by Instructions for Use Version 1.3.2 that must be issued alongside your test kits. Please see the [Blue How to Guide](#) on the correct and legal way to issue these test kits to your staff.



Figure 1: LFD self test kits (Test at home)



Figure 2: Label on LFD Self Test Kits (Test at home)



Figure 3: Box of 7 LFD self test kits (Test at home)

# Details on deliveries cont...

## Delivery 2 – 1 March to 5 March – LFD ATS test kits for testing pupils/students on-site (ATS).

This delivery contains a number of boxes marked Innova (Figure 4). Each box contains a total of 675 tests. That is 27 smaller individual boxes of 25 test kits. This delivery will also include all of the PPE required for running an Asymptomatic Test site. Further details on the Asymptomatic Test Site PPE and set up is available in the [Green How To Guide for setting up an ATS](#).



Figure 4: LFD ATS test kits out box



Figure 5: Label on LFD ATS Test kits

PPE also included:

- Test registration cards
- Face visors
- Surgical face masks
- Disposable gloves (S,M,L,XL)
- Emesis (sick) bowls
- LFD Barcodes
- Disposable Aprons

For information, testing kits and PPE are delivered on large pallets containing up to 1000 testing kits, PCR tests and PPE. The image below shows how they typically arrive.



Figure 5: Typically how test kits and PPE arrive



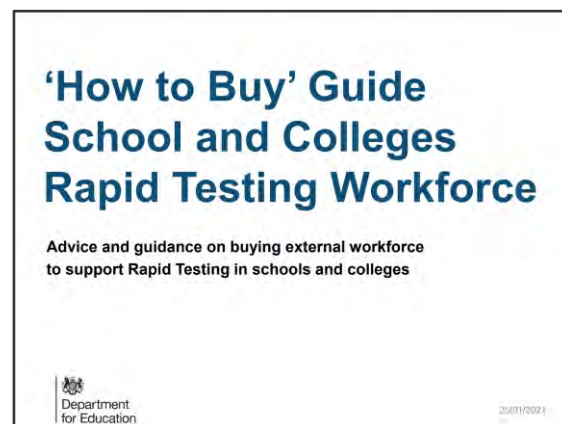
Figure 6: Typically how test kits and PPE arrive

## Delivery 3 – 8 March to 15 March - LFD self test kits (Test at Home) for Secondary and College pupils and students.

This is exactly the same as delivery 1, except it will be in larger quantities to provide sufficient test kits for your pupils and students.

# Workforce and Funding

- To operate your ATS when pupils and students first return you will need a workforce. The [How To Set up an ATS \(Green Guide\)](#) sets out the workforce you will need and provides links on how you can recruit that workforce, specifically the [How To Buy guidance](#). The Department has identified a range of voluntary support offers, which may be available in your area to access. Please contact the DfE Helpline for details of how to explore these should you require additional workforce to carry out testing.



- We appreciate running an ATS when students return does require a workforce, as a result we have made funding available to help you do this. In total £115m has been made available so that you can recover reasonable costs when operating your ATS at full scale during the initial return of pupils and students. For example, a secondary school with 1000 pupils will receive approximately £19,000 to support with the rapid testing of all pupils. A special school with 400 pupils will receive approximately £18,000.
- We have produced a [workforce planning tool](#) that sets out the number of staff required to deliver on-site testing, and which indicates the level of funding you will be entitled to.
- We know that some SEND schools may want to retain a full scale ATS rather than move to test at home. As a result, we have built in funding so that, should they choose to, SEND can maintain a full scale ATS at their school.
- There are no specific workforce requirements required for test at home

# SEND Considerations

In recognition of the additional considerations specialist settings will have to take into account when delivering rapid asymptomatic testing, we will be publishing additional guidance on 26<sup>th</sup> February which can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings/mass-asymptomatic-testing-in-specialist-settings>

## ? **Our pupils can only test on-site what should we do?**

Settings should work with pupils/students and their families to agree the most appropriate way of them accessing testing. Settings should maintain on-site ATS testing facilities where possible. Even if it is appropriate for the majority of pupils/students to test at home we recommend settings retain a small ATS so that they can offer testing to pupils/students unable or unwilling to test at home. In some settings the asymptomatic test site may need to maintain more capacity if a large number of pupils/students cannot take advantage of the home testing offer. As a result, we have built in funding so that, should they choose to, SEND settings can maintain a full scale on-site ATS at their school.

## ? **What if a pupil can't test at school but will test at home?**

In circumstances where a pupil/student would not be able to be tested through on-site (ATS) testing but who could be tested at home by a suitably competent adult, settings can provide home testing kits to them from the outset (without the pupil being tested at an ATS first), where this is appropriate for the pupil/student.

## ? **What if a pupil can't tolerate a swab at all?**

Any individual unable to tolerate a swab should not be tested. Testing technology is developing all the time. We are continuing to work proactively on other approaches to testing for children and young people who are unable to tolerate a throat or nasal swab.

# Additional Questions you may have

On their initial return pupils/students should be tested three times on-site (ATS) before transitioning to test at home.



## **How should I manage the return and do I need to prevent pupils mingling?**

Ideally pupils and students should be kept apart before their first test to prevent those unknowingly carrying COVID 19 from transmitting it to others. However, we recognise that this is very difficult. Schools and colleges should be flexible and use their experience from managing things like exams and fire drills to keep pupils and students apart as far as reasonably possible until they have taken their first test. This might include bringing pupils/students in throughout the day/week on a rolling basis. **Pupils/Students with symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend school/college and follow UK guidance on self-isolation.**



## **How soon can pupils and students return to the classroom?**

Pupils and students should return to face-to-face education following their first negative test result. Pupils and students not undergoing testing should attend school/college in line with the phased return arrangements in your setting.



## **I have pupils in from 22 February, when should I start testing them?**

If you have pupils or students in school or college from 22 February, such as vulnerable or key worker children, then you can start testing them before the rest of your students/pupils return to help manage the flow of pupils/students through your on-site ATS. You will need to keep testing them on-site (ATS) until your test at home kits arrive from w/c 8 March 2021.



## **What supervision will different age groups need for testing on-site (ATS)?**

All secondary age pupils who are 11 years or above can swab themselves via an ATS. The programme extends to adult learners attending college (19+). There is no need for primary age pupils to be tested (i.e. those in Year 6 and below). If you are an all-through school, you can test 11 year olds in the primary part of your school.



## **What supervision do different age groups need for testing at home, after they have done their first three tests on-site (ATS)?**

Pupils/Students aged 18 and over should self-test and report the result, with assistance if needed. Pupils/students aged 12-17 should self-test and report with adult supervision. The adult may conduct the test if necessary. When testing at home children aged 11 (who attend a secondary school) should be tested by an adult.

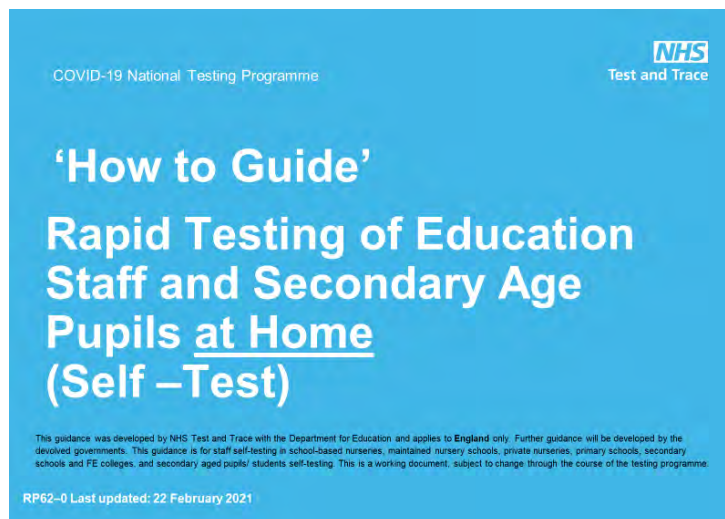


# Further Guidance

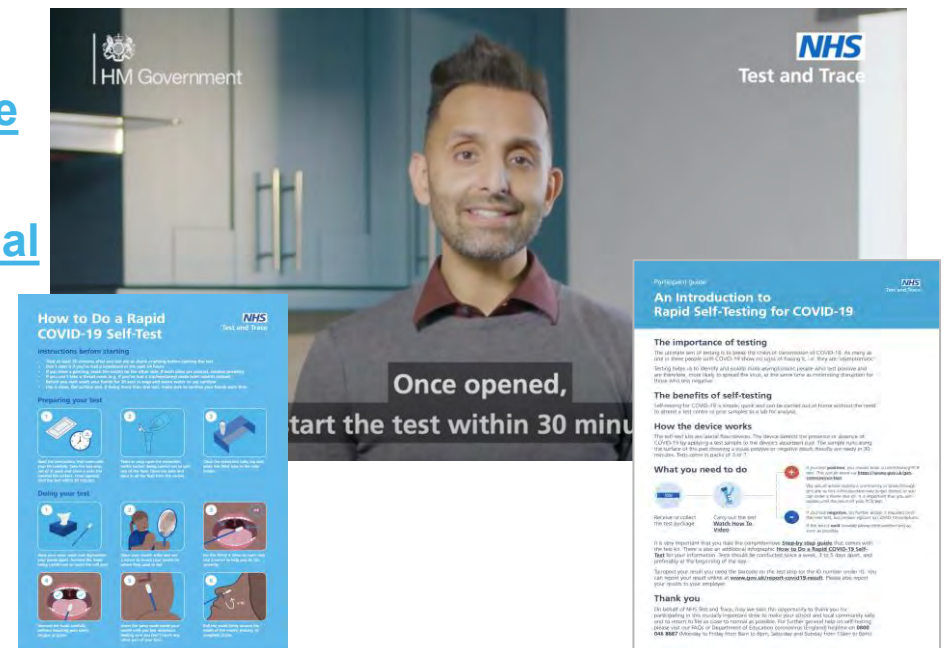
Available guidance for helping you set up your **ATS** for testing pupils and students on their initial return



Available guidance for testing your staff via **test at home** kits and then transitioning your pupils and students to test at home (after three initial ATS tests)



## NHS home testing instructional video



# Important Contacts

Schools and colleges in England can raise questions, concerns or report issues, via **the DfE coronavirus helpline: 0800 046 8687**. **Opening hours** Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 6pm. You can also use this [contact form](#) to report issues relating to delivery and supply of testing kits.

**Anyone with one or more symptoms of coronavirus** - a high temperature, a new continuous cough; or a loss or change in sense of smell or taste - should self-isolate and [book a test](#) or call 119 in England and Wales, or 0300 303 2713 in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**If you have an urgent media query** or you or your school or college is approached by a member of the media, please [contact the Department of Health and Social Care press office](#) in the first instance.

The latest guidance and templates are available on the [School and College document sharing platform for Rapid Testing](#).

# Where to find more information

Latest information on Rapid Testing is available at:

[Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

[Schools and Colleges document sharing platform for Rapid Testing](#)

This page will be regularly updated to include:

- FAQs
- How to order more test kits
- Up to date government guidelines
- More detailed information about the testing process
- The digital process for managing registration and linking to the national Test & Trace process
- Contact information for DfE and DHSC support teams for additional resources and documents

Additionally you may find the lesson plans and activity kits available at [www.storicise.com](https://www.storicise.com) a useful way of engaging pupils and students in rapid testing.



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