NHS
Test and Trace

COVID-19 National Testing Programme:

Schools & Colleges handbook

18 NOV 2020

These are working documents and subject to change through the course of the pilots

What you will learn

The purpose of this pack is to support teachers, staff and administrators
with piloting new rapid Covid-19 testing at schools and colleges:

Explains testing to schools/colleges
and the requirements of staff/teachers

Relevant policies and
guidance

Example communications materials for
use before, during and after testing
(e.g. letters to parents/guardians)

Useful documents to promote
testing (e.g. posters,
templates, signages)

Please note, all content presented in this pack is subject to change through the course of the pilots. We would really value and welcome your feedback on it via your Test and Trace engagement lead. If you have any queries about any content in this document, or require further support, please contact the Mass Testing Communications team: masstestingcomms@dhsc.gov.uk

Content

1 **Overview of the mass testing programme**
- purpose of mass testing
- overview of the technology
- what the process looks like

2 **Countdown to testing**
- suggested communication activities
- a new approach to bubble management
- obtaining consent
- what to do if someone tests positive

3 **Sharing your experience:** Lessons learned from schools and colleges

4 **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** (EDI) considerations

5 **Media handling** guidance

6 **Appendices** (test instructions, sample letters, guidance on test results, additional resources, FAQs)

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Our purpose

Our purpose at this stage of the National Testing Programme is to test more people who do not have symptoms ('asymptomatic testing').

This is focused on areas or people who are more likely to have coronavirus or be at risk from the disease.

New, quicker tests (known as lateral flow tests) will enable us to test more people, more quickly without the need for a laboratory. This will support the economy and wider society to return to a more normal way of life.

Schools, colleges and universities are a key part of our communities, and we want to ensure they are as safe as possible for students & pupils, staff and the wider community.

Staff, students and pupils without symptoms, but who carry the virus, may spread the virus to many others. In addition to measures already in place at schools/colleges, by testing them, we will be able to isolate, prevent the virus from spreading and protect others.

Asymptomatic Testing

Contact tracing

Lateral Flow Tests

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Pupils and staff testing

Students/pupils and staff will be tested using validated Lateral Flow Antigen tests

Lateral flow antigen tests are intended to detect the presence or absence of coronavirus by applying a swab or saliva sample to the device's absorbent pad.

The sample runs along the surface of the pad, showing at the end a visual positive or negative result dependent on the presence of the virus.

Lateral flow devices do not require a laboratory to process the test. The devices are designed to be intuitive and require minimal training to operate.

Swabbing and processing of these tests will be conducted at a dedicated testing site either by trained personnel or as a self-test with supervision from trained personnel.

Lateral flow tests are validated technology, they are safe, inexpensive and the results are trusted.

Lateral Flow Testing

COVID testing tech pilots

Accessible and easy to use

No lab required, with fast results
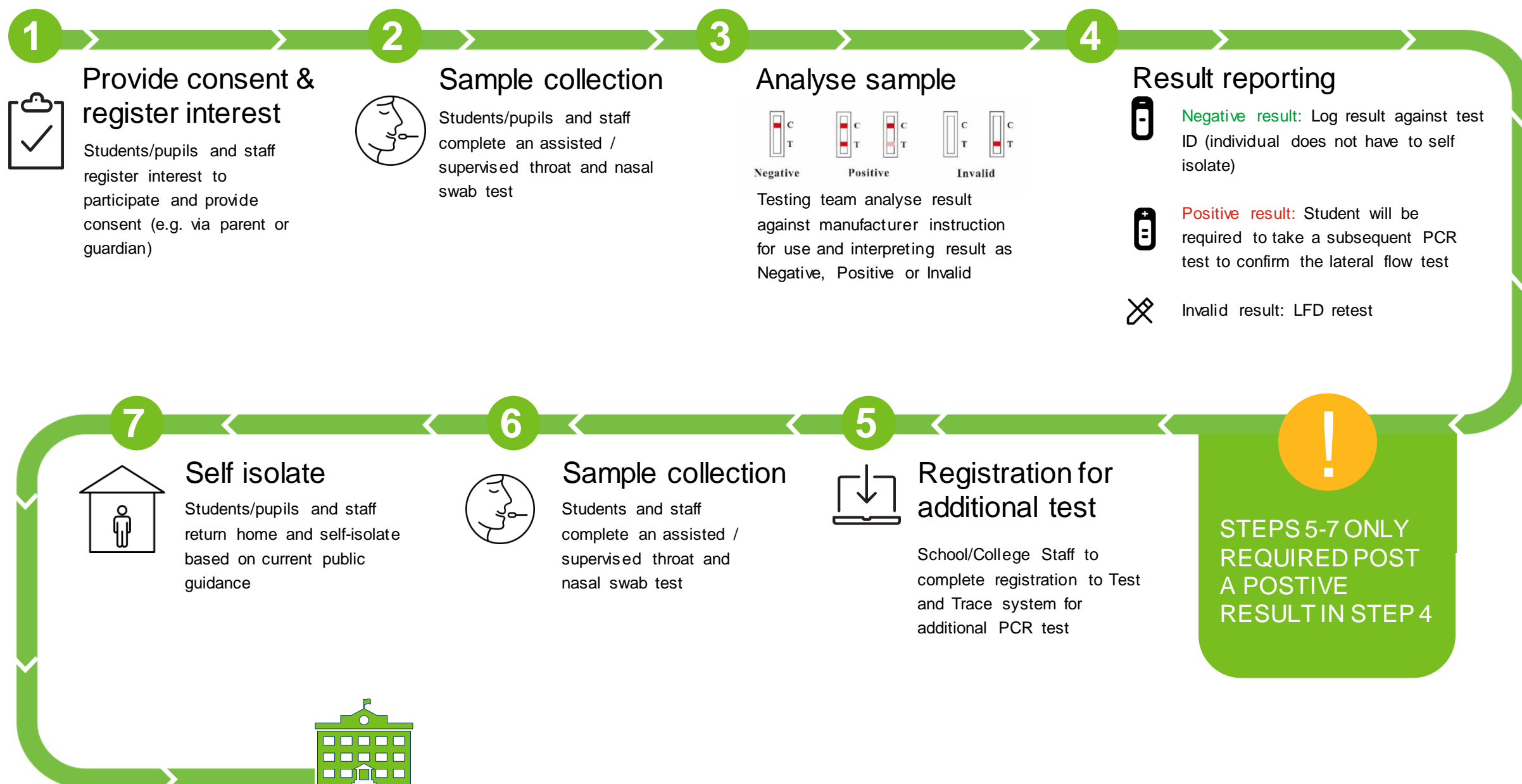
Safe and trusted technology

! Note for teachers: these messages and graphics have been developed by DHSC, and can help you communicate benefits of lateral flow test with students

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What the process looks like

Step by step guide to the seven steps and options

1

Provide consent & register interest

Students/pupils and staff register interest to participate and provide consent (e.g. via parent or guardian)

2

Sample collection

Students/pupils and staff complete an assisted / supervised throat and nasal swab test

3

Analyse sample

Negative   Positive   Invalid

Testing team analyse result against manufacturer instruction for use and interpreting result as Negative, Positive or Invalid

4

Result reporting

Negative result: Log result against test ID (individual does not have to self isolate)

Positive result: Student will be required to take a subsequent PCR test to confirm the lateral flow test

Invalid result: LFD retest

7

Self isolate

Students/pupils and staff return home and self-isolate based on current public guidance

6

Sample collection

Students and staff complete an assisted / supervised throat and nasal swab test

5

Registration for additional test

School/College Staff to complete registration to Test and Trace system for additional PCR test

!

STEPS 5-7 ONLY REQUIRED POST A POSTIVE RESULT IN STEP 4

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Suggested communication activities with parents, students and staff

📅 Timing (~ days before launch)	💬 Activity	👥 Audience	📄 Link to resources
10	School/college head teacher review the testing engagement handbook and check if they have the latest guidance and templates	School/college leader	This pack
10	Send letter via most appropriate channel to inform testing activities taking place	Local stakeholders, governors	Sample letter, attached
10	Send letter via most appropriate channel to inform testing activities taking place, attach test result guidance, privacy notice and consent form	Parents Staff	Sample letter, attached Consent form, attached Privacy notice, attached Result guidance, attached
7	Educate and raise awareness of testing activities, provide reassurance (e.g. assemblies, form group discussions)	Pupils/students	Posters, user guides
7	Host Q&A session to clarify/address concerns	Parents Staff	Sample FAQs, attached
5	Track and ensure consent forms are received Send reminder of testing activities	Parents Staff	Sample letter, attached Consent form, attached
1-3	School/college head teacher sends out appointment reminder, and testing instructions, test result guidance	Parents, students/ pupils and staff	Registration reminder (to be developed) Testing instructions, attached Test result guidance, slides 22-27
As needed	Communicate test results to parents, students/ pupils Provide advice on new approach to bubble management and daily testing arrangements	Parents, students/ pupils and staff	Advice on when student/pupils test positive, attached Advice on bubble management, attached

A new approach to bubble management
Guidance for Schools and Colleges

As part of this research study, a new approach to bubble management has been developed. This will allow those who are in the same bubble (e.g. a class group) as someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 to return to school/college if they agree to be tested once daily.

A member of my child's bubble tested positive, what are my options?

I want to continue attending school/college…

You'll need to take a lateral flow and PCR test at the start of each school day for **14 days** to remain in school / college

You can choose to opt out from daily testing at any time and self-isolate.

I'd rather stay at home…

If you do not wish to be tested daily or are unable to be tested for any reason, you must self-isolate in accordance with national guidance until 14 days after the person they are a contact of tested positive

If your lateral flow test is negative

You may continue with your normal activities until your next test is due.

If your lateral flow test is positive

You must follow the national guidance and self isolate until the result of your PCR test is available.

If your PCR test is positive

You must complete 10 days self isolation. All other identified close contacts and household members of this positive case will now also follow the national guidance.

If your PCR test is negative

You may continue with your normal activities until your next test is due.

! Any new positive cases identified in a bubble during testing will reset the clock for the bubble to the start of 14 days.

Please find detailed guidance on bubble management in the separate attachments

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Obtaining consent

Schools and colleges are experienced at gaining consent from their staff as well as pupils/students and their parents/legal guardians (if under 16 years old) for a range of activities and medical procedures.

In order to simplify this process, and ensure it meets clinical and data protection guidelines we have developed a template consent form, privacy notice and covering letter to be sent out via letter or email. These are attached separately and we would advise circulating these ideally 10 days before the first testing begins.

IMPORTANT: Please amend the letters, privacy notice and consent form with your school/college details etc. – highlighted parts to amend/delete are in red.

Please find letters, privacy notice and consent forms in the separate attachment

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What to do if a pupil/student tests positive for COVID-19

Guidance for Schools and Colleges

A pupil/student in my school / college has tested positive, what do I do now?

1. Record details

- Ensure any details of the pupil / student are recorded **securely** to protect their privacy.
- They will need to do a confirmatory **PCR test.**

Do a test at school / college

They may find the **extra PPE** worn by the tester a bit scary, do reassure them it is just an extra precaution.

Take a test kit home

Please check they can **follow the instructions** and know how to do the test and return it in the post.

2. Contact parent / legal guardian

Call their **parent / legal guardian**, and arrange for the pupil/student to be collected if needed.

Find **a quiet space** to talk with the pupil/student being mindful of the need for social distancing / PPE

3. Provide reassurance

They may be anxious about their health and impact on their family. This is a chance to reassure them:
- For most people, symptoms will last up to 14 days and be mild.
- **There is support available** with learning from home and support for their parents with work and benefits.

5. Reminder to share result of PCR test

Before they go, remind them to let the school/college know about the **result of the PCR test** (they will be told via text/email)

4. Offer support

Check they can **access remote learning** at home:
- a laptop / internet access
- a quiet space to study

It is really important that they follow the national guidance and self isolate:
Pupils/students/staff: 10 Days
Household members: 14 Days
They can **take pride** that they are doing their bit to protect their friends and family and defeat the virus

!

Signpost to other advice:
- Support if you're off work while self-isolating: https://bit.ly/isolatesupport
- If you're worried about your health, visit https://www.nhs.uk/ or call 111.
- Remote learning advice: https://bit.ly/covidhomelearning

There is more detailed advice in the pdf attachment **"What to do if a pupil tests positive"**

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Sharing your experience:
Lessons learned from schools and colleges

As the schools and colleges pilots roll out, we have been asking teachers, students, pupils and parents how we might conduct mass testing most effectively in schools and colleges.

Therefore, we are asking schools and colleges to participate in follow up research to help improve the service and experience for everyone as we roll this out to more schools and colleges.

We need your help to build on this feedback, in order to better understand the needs and pain points of students, pupils, parents and staff.

! For more information on research participation, please contact your Test and Trace Engagement Lead.

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We've gathered some valuable feedback and lessons from schools and colleges:

We want to hear from your school / college's parents, students/pupils and staff, to keep building on the knowledge and improve the mass testing experience.

What we need your help with

- **Interviews** - Will you help us identify a small number of staff, parents and students/pupils to participate in a survey and be interviewed remotely?
- **Surveys** - Can you send the link to parents and staff to participate?
- **Observation** - Can we visit your school or college to observe testing?

Benefits of feedback for your school/college

- Simplified processes
- Increased clarity in communication
- More comprehensive levels of support based on special needs and requirements

Minimise impact and offer support for children with additional needs

Help us increase buy-in by parents and students/pupils manage expectations, and build our knowledge

Ensure guides are simple to understand and use because we're so busy we don't have time to do much more than we already are

Build trust and guarantee safety

Minimise disruption to the teaching day

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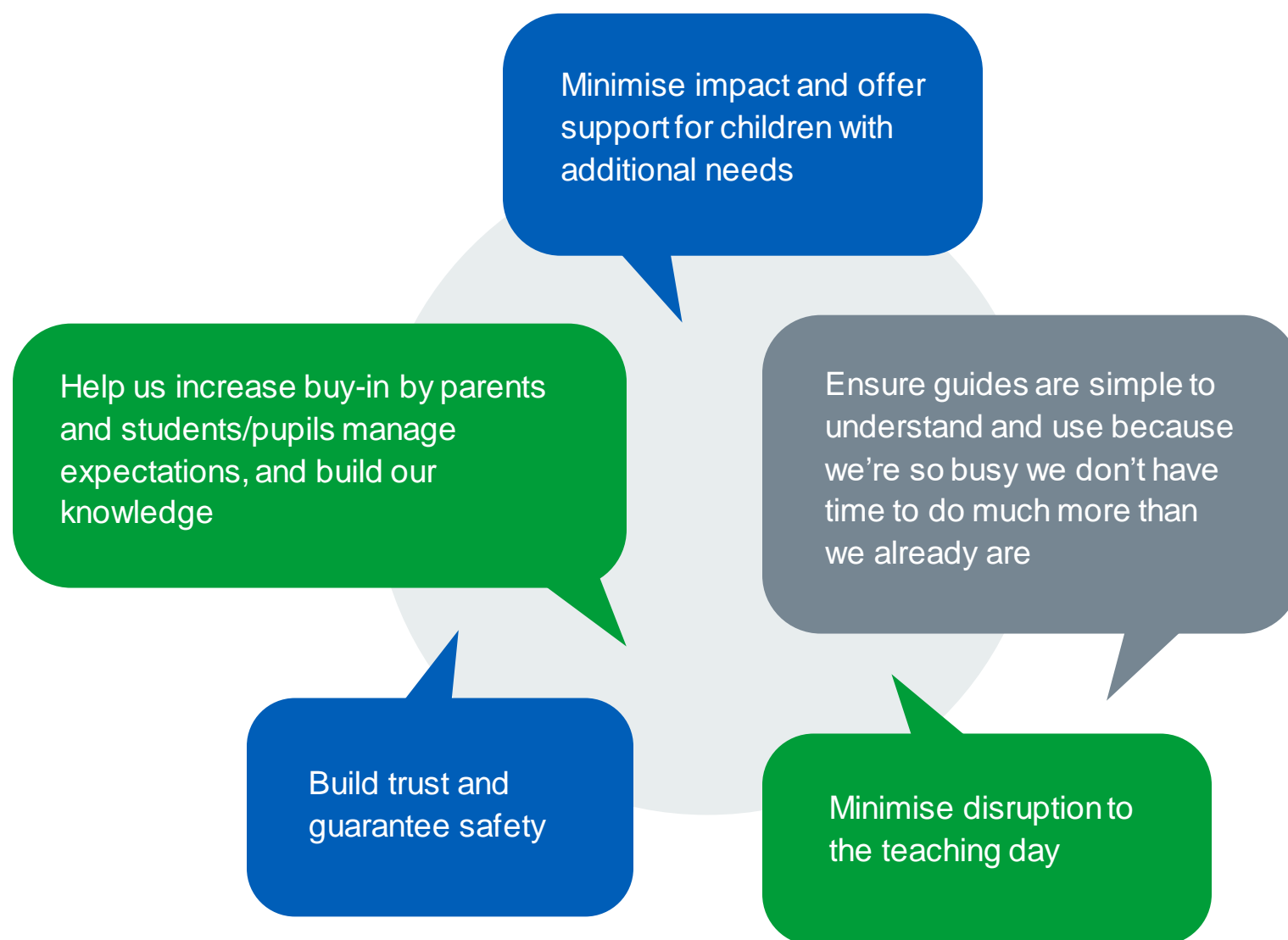
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) considerations

We have a responsibility to ensure materials and processes are accessible to all and being mindful of potential barriers to participation.

Some guiding principles are outlined below and based on your input we will provide further guidance and advice but please contact your Test and Trace Engagement Lead to discuss any particular requirements you may have e.g. different formats, translation or accessibility.

Communication: Are we communicating through formats accessible to everybody including those who have disabilities, those who are digitally excluded or face language barriers?

Engagement: Are we engaging with local communities and faith leaders whose co-operation and support can mitigate the concerns of those who have limited trust or confidence in the government?

Representation and language appropriateness: Are the visual images and language we use in our communications and across our campaign locations representative and inclusive?

Site accessibility/User guidance: Do our testing sites and guidance include reasonable provisions for those with both visible and non-visible disabilities?

Data: Do we use clear languages across our campaigns to explain what data is collected, why it is being collected and how it will be used?

Isolation support: Have we considered the barriers vulnerable groups face to isolating and adequately communicated what resources are available from the Government and their local communities?

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Media handling

Consistent, accurate and positive communication about testing activity is essential. To achieve this;

- Your support for the delivery of communication activity is welcomed and encouraged. Please use the templates and messaging provided in this pack as a basis for content

- Please give a minimum of seven days' notice for media communication about any pilot, including press notices or media visits.

- All media enquiries about the mass testing programme should be directed to DHSC press office (pressofficenewsdesk@dhsc.gov.uk)

- Schools and colleges should respond to enquiries about their role and involvement in the pilot only.

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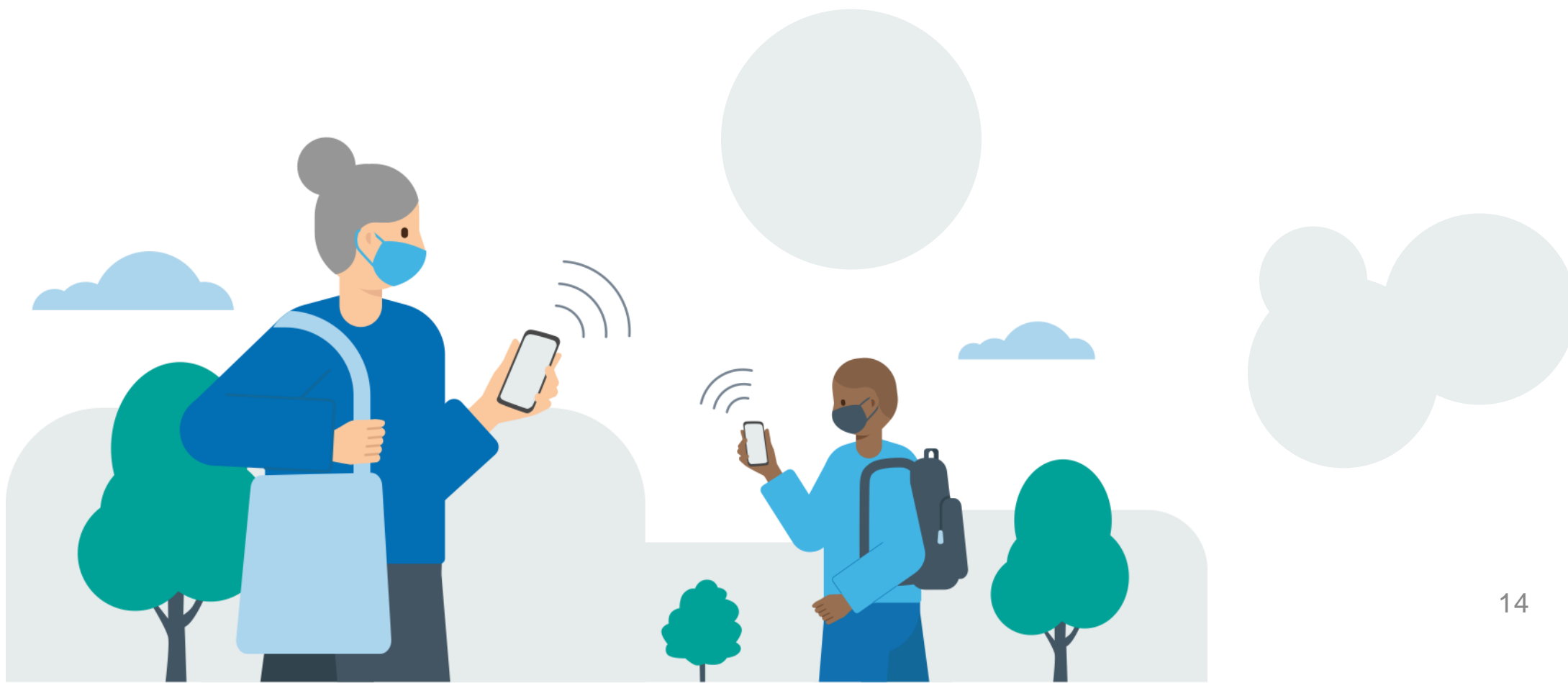
Social media guidance

Consistent, accurate and positive communication about testing activity is essential. To achieve this;

In the initial stages of the school and college pilots, we would advise communicating with parents and staff directly via existing school/college communication channels e.g. letters/emails home.

At this stage, we would discourage proactive public social media posts or press releases about the school/college's involvement in this pilot, but this may be revised as the number of pilots increased and based on feedback from schools, colleges, staff, pupils/students and parents.

However, **we would encourage you to monitor your existing social media channels,** parent forums etc. and provide any feedback from staff, pupils/students and parents on the trials to your Test and Trace Engagement Manager.

Data security and handling

A template Privacy notice has been developed, in order to meet data protection guidance, please share this with staff, parents/legal guardians, students/pupils. **All data stored by the school/college should be deleted after 14 days.**

Where data from the pilot will be stored: For English residents, your data will be stored in line with the Records Management Code of Practice for Health and Social Care 2016. This means we will keep your information for up to 8 years before we dispose of it.

If you live in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, there is country-specific information on retention of records.

Policies on Data Handling: The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) publishes a large amount of data that is available for use by the media. This can be found here:

- https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public
- https://digital.nhs.uk/dashboards/progression#dashboard
- https://coronavirus-staging.data.gov.uk/
- https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nhs-test-and-trace-statistics-england-weekly-reports

Data that has not been formally published in the public domain, either on one of the above sites, or through discussion in the House of Commons has typically not been made available.

Authorities wishing to publish or provide data that is not already available in the public domain should ensure it has gone through the appropriate checks to ensure it complies with the data protection code of practice: https://ico.org.uk/media/1061/anonymisation-code.pdf

If you are unsure whether you can provide data please contact masstestingcomms@dhsc.gov.uk and if requested by the media, please refer the journalist to the DHSC main press office: pressofficenewsdesk@dhsc.gov.uk

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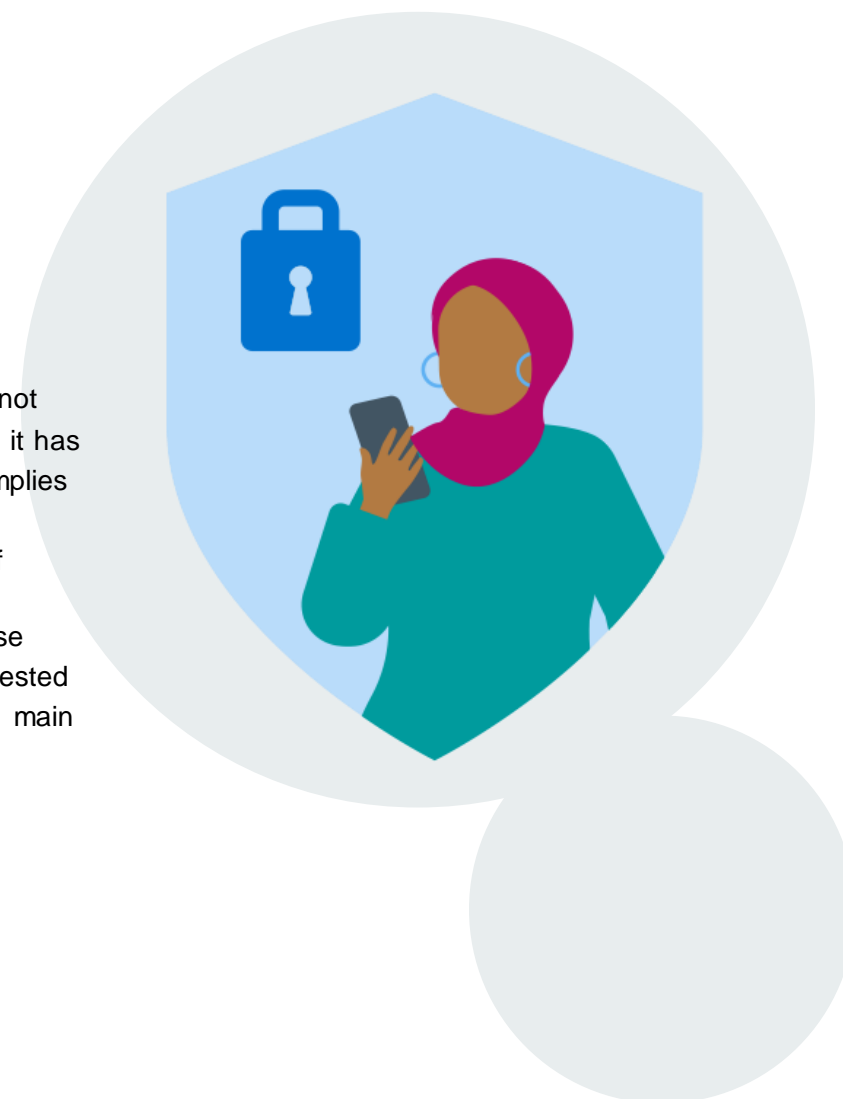
Site access and photography

A template Privacy notice has been developed to share with those participating in the tests, in order to meet data protection guidance, please share this with staff, parents/legal guardians, students/pupils.

Please let the DHSC mass testing communications team know if you would like to conduct any photography and filming on site for external communications purposes. DHSC will then liaise with the service providers press offices and site teams if there is a requirement for on-site staff to be included. We may also request to see or approve any content before it is used.

Please share the following details with masstestingcomms@dhsc.gov.uk:

- What's the purpose of the photo shoot or filming? How is the footage going to be used?
- Who will be taking the picture, i.e. name of the agency?
- Do you need anything from the operational staff on site?
- When do you hope to visit the site? For how long would you be on site?

!

Please find below some guidance that we usually share with photographers/ videographers attending the site.

Those tested – Please protect those being tested and their identities if they have not granted permission for filming. Please avoid faces and number plates (at drive through sites)

unless permission has been given.

Operational staff – Please be respectful of the teams on the site and their time. They are working extremely hard and

their focus is on completing tests safely and quickly.

Visitors info - Please send your full name in advance of the visit and bring photo ID with you.

Appendices

Useful collaterals to support communication and engagement

1 **Test instructions**

2 **Sample letters to parents, pupils and staff**

3 **Guidance after receiving test result**

4 **External resources & useful contacts**

5 **FAQs**

Test instructions / Posters

For pupils/students (assisted swabbing)
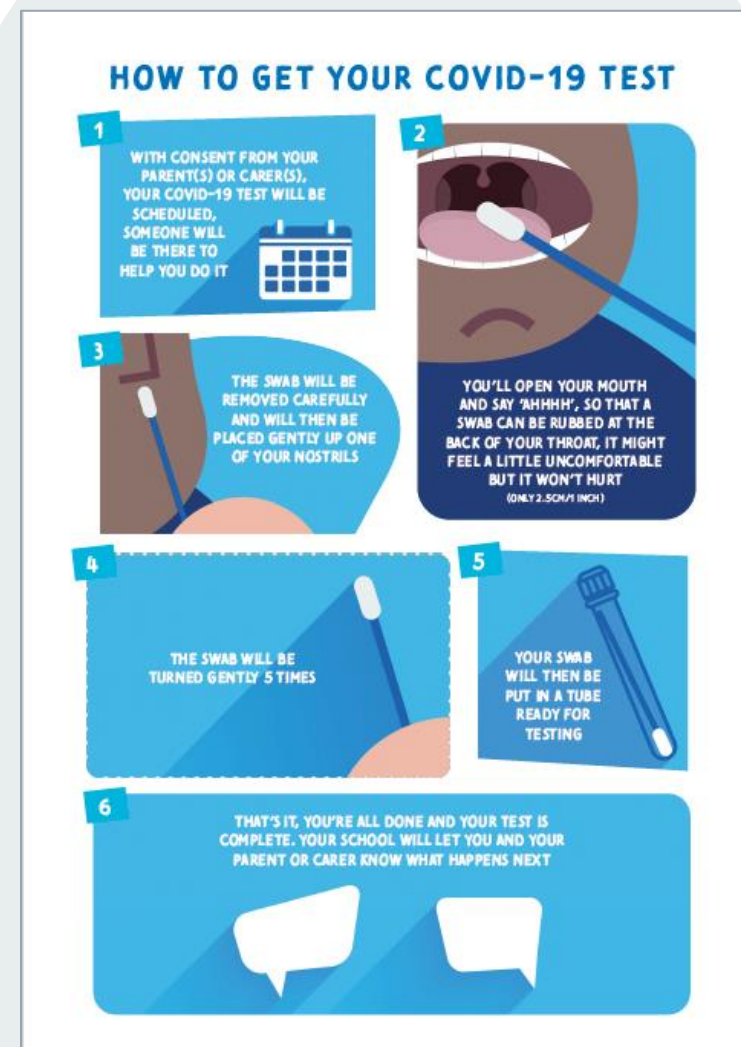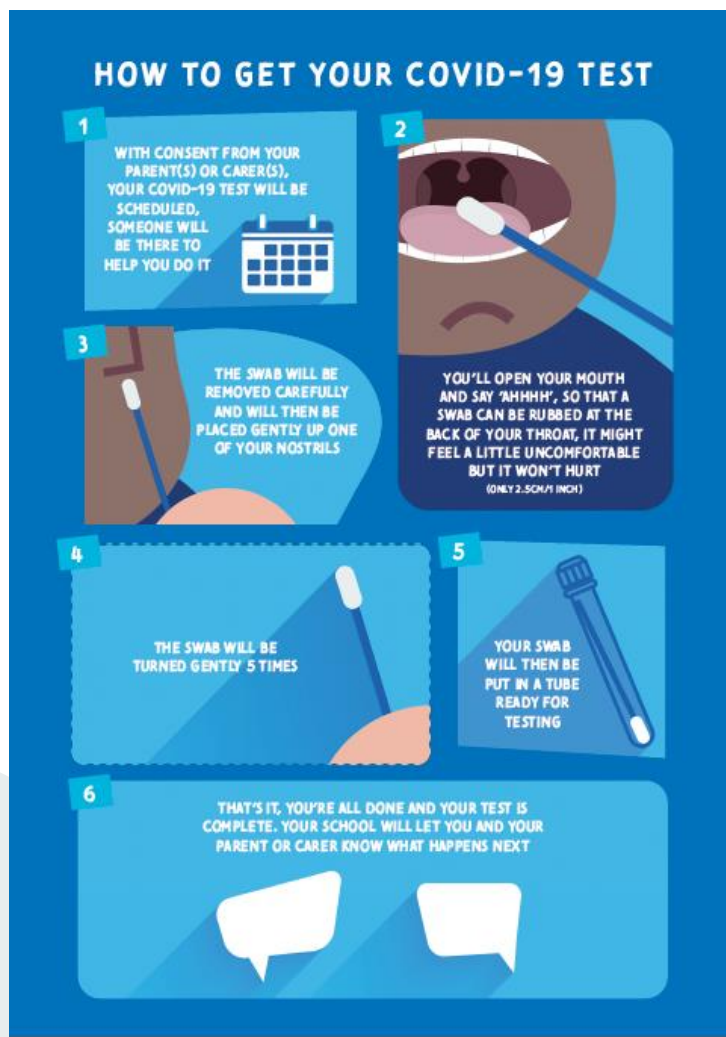
Please find posters in the separate attachment

Test instructions / Booklet

For pupils/students (assisted swabbing)

Please find instructional leaflets in the separate attachment

Sample letters to parents, pupils and staff

About these templates

Please find below three template letters/emails we would encourage you to send to pupils, staff, parents and local stakeholders/governors.

These have been drafted based on accessibility best practice (e.g. left justified, use of bold text, minimum 14 point font size) but we would welcome any feedback on accessibility of providing these in different languages or formats.

We are also aware that you will know your local community best, so please feel free to adapt these templates to your needs and **please remove any covering information/protective markings and add in the dates as well as school/college information where indicated.**

If you have any questions or feedback please email masstestingcomms@dhsc.gov.uk

Please find sample letters leaflets in the separate attachment

COVID-related pupil/student absence -
Guidance for Parents (1/2)

The guidance below addresses what a positive or negative test result means for your child and your household, and the support available to you.

What do I need to do if my child tests positive for COVID-19?

- Do not send your child to school/college
- They will need to take a further 'PCR test' (similar to those done in testing sites) to confirm the positive result, they will be able to do this at school/college or take a test kit home.
- Contact the school / college to inform us of the PCR test result which you will receive via text / email
- Your child will need to self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days according to guidelines.

When can my child return to school / college after testing positive for COVID-19?

- Your child can stop self-isolating and return to school / college on day 11 if they've not had a high temperature for 48 hours and are well
- They can return after 10 days even if they have a cough or loss of taste/smell as these symptoms can last for several weeks

How does my child testing positive impact the rest of my household?

- You will have to self-isolate the whole household for 14 days
- Follow the latest government guidance: http://bit.ly/Govukselfisolate

COVID-related pupil/student absence -
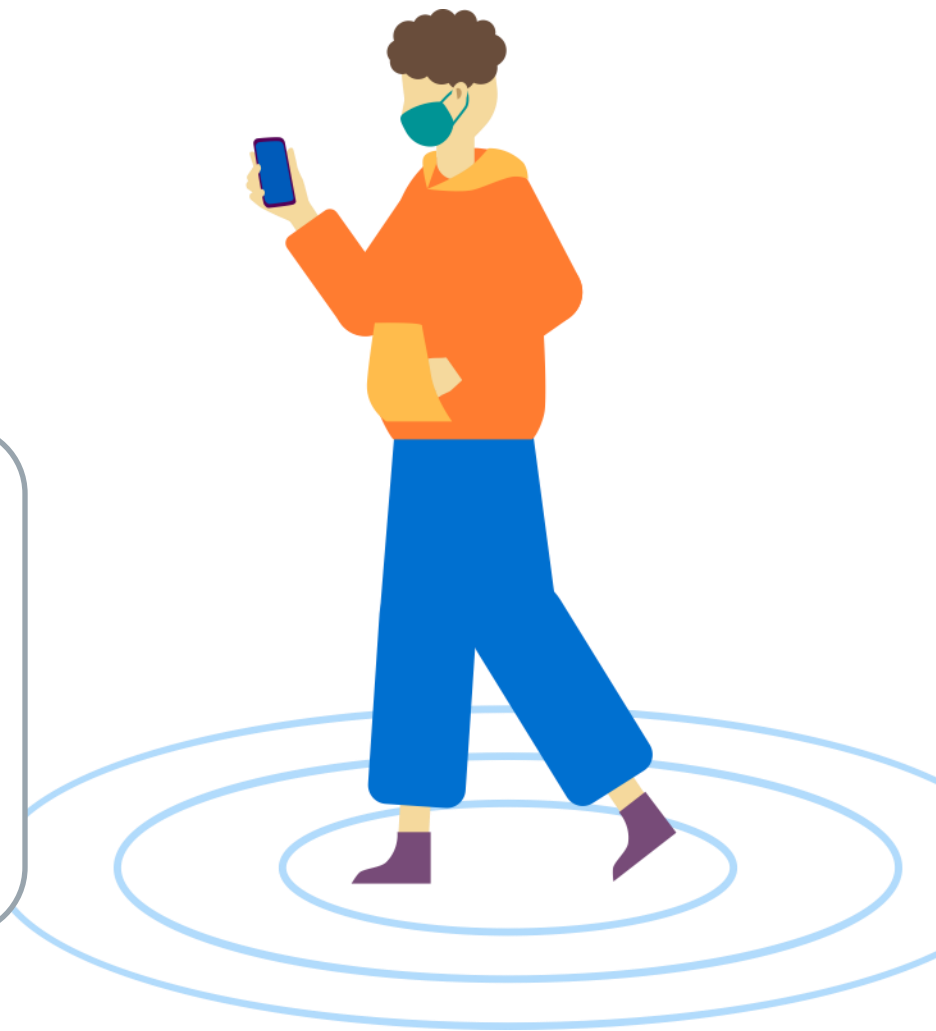## Guidance for Parents (2/2)

The guidance below addresses what a positive or negative test result means for your child and your household, and the support available to you.

What does a positive result mean for my child's education?

We have a strong commitment to ensuring all pupils can access a wide range of learning resources remotely and will continue to support their education whilst they are self-isolating.

Additional information can be found https://bit.ly/covidhomelearning

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What if my child tests negative for COVID-19?

- There will be no need for you to self-isolate and you can remain in school / college as normal
- Social distancing and face coverings where appropriate will remain necessary
- You will not be informed if your test result is negative

! Addressing your concerns

For more information you can visit: https://bit.ly/covidhomelearning

If you're worried about your child medically, visit https://www.nhs.uk/ or call 111.

COVID-related pupil/student absence
Guidance for pupils (1/2)

The guidance below addresses what a positive or negative test result means for you and your household, and the support available to you.

What do I need to do if I test positive for COVID-19?

- Do not come to school / college
- You will need to take a further 'PCR test' (similar to those done in testing sites) to confirm the positive result, you will be able to do this at school / college or take a test kit home.
- Contact the school / college to inform us of the PCR test result which you will receive via text / email
- You will need to self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days according to guidelines.

When can I return to school / college if I tested positive for COVID-19?

- You can stop self-isolating and return to school / college on day 11 if you've not had a high temperature for 48 hours and are well
- You can return after 10 days even if you have a cough or loss of taste/smell as these symptoms can last for several weeks

How does testing positive impact the rest of my household?

- Your household will need to self-isolate for 14 days
- You can speak to your parents about this or seek advice from your teachers

COVID-related pupil/student absence
Guidance for pupils (2/2)

The guidance below addresses what a positive or negative test result means for you and your household, and the support available to you.

What does this mean for my education?

- We have a strong commitment to ensuring all pupils/students can access a wide range of learning resources remotely and will continue to support your education whilst you are self-isolating.
- Additional information can be found at https://bit.ly/covidhomelearning

What if I test negative for COVID-19?

- There will be no need for you to self-isolate and you can remain in school / college as normal
- Social distancing and face coverings where appropriate will remain necessary
- You will not be informed if your test result is negative

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COVID-related pupil/student absence
Guidance for Staff (1/2)

The guidance below addresses what a positive or negative test result means for you and your household, and the support available to you.

What do I need to do if I test positive for COVID-19?

- Do not come to school / college
- You will need to take a further 'PCR test' (similar to those done in testing sites) to confirm the positive result, you will be able to do this at school / college or take a test kit home.
- Contact the school / college to inform us of the PCR test result which you will receive via text / email
- You will need to self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days according to guidelines.

When can I return to school / college if I tested positive for COVID-19?

- You can stop self-isolating and return to school / college on day 11 if you've not had a high temperature for 48 hours and are well
- You can return after 10 days even if you have a cough or loss of taste/smell as these symptoms can last for several weeks

How does testing positive impact the rest of my household?

- You will have to self-isolate the whole household for 14 days
- Follow the latest government guidance: http://bit.ly/Govukselfisolate

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COVID-related pupil/student absence
Guidance for Staff (2/2)

NHS Test and Trace

The guidance below addresses what a positive or negative test result means for you and your household, and the support available to you.

What if I test negative for COVID-19?

- There will be no need for you to self-isolate and you can resume activities as normal
- Social distancing and face coverings where appropriate will remain necessary
- You will not be informed if your test result is negative

! Addressing your concerns

If you're worried about your health, visit https://www.nhs.uk/ or call 111.
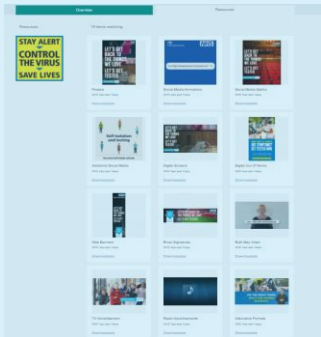
Additional resources

Useful contacts

If you have an urgent query or you or your school / college are approached by a member of the media, please contact pressofficenewsdesk@dhsc.gov.uk in the first instance. You can also raise questions specific to the Department for Education, via the DfE coronavirus helpline: 0800 046 8687 (Mon-Fri 8am-6pm; Sat-Sun 10am-6pm).

Anyone with one or more of symptoms of coronavirus - a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste - should book a test at nhs.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119 in England and Wales, or 0300 303 2713 in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Additional resources

Resource		Access
Campaign Collaterals from Public Health England on Test and Trace • Posters • Signages • Social media content **Please note: there are a range of technologies and processes being used by NHS Test and Trace, so please check before using any of these materials.**		• https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/ • https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/Test-and-Trace/
Guidance for teachers, school / college leaders, carers, parents and students • Support learning during coronavirus • Pupil wellbeing and safety • School operations, exams and managing a school or early years setting • Funding and support for education and childcare • Student accommodation, travel and financial support • Further and higher education and vocational training		• https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare
Remote learning resources and support		• https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#section-5-contingency-planning-for-remote-education • https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term
Printable action list on what to do if a pupil is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)		• https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/928841/Symptomatic_children_action_list_SCHOOLS_FINAL_22-10.pdf

Additional resources

Resource	Access
Test and Trace resources in alternative formats including: • Audio • BSL and BSL (with voiceover) • Easy read and large print formats Alternative Formats NHS Test and Trace Downloadable	• PHE corona virus resource hub: https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/ • Most folders accessible to all; some folders restricted to .gov or .nhs email users, register here and then email partnerships@phe.gov.uk requesting superuser access
Easy read guidance: • Gov.uk stay at home guidance and staying well during coronavirus information • Achieve together easy read guidance on what is coronavirus and getting tested • Rdash easy read information on coronavirus, face coverings, self-isolation, swab testing	• https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance • https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876996/Easy_read_looking_after_your_feelings_and_body.pdf • https://www.achievetogether.co.uk/easy-read/covid-19-easy-reads/ • https://www.rdash.nhs.uk/support-and-advice/coronavirus-information/coronavirus-british-sign-language/
Coronavirus news summaries and information from various charities in various formats • Signhealth news summaries in BSL • RNIB coronavirus updates e.g. on sighted guiding and wearing face coverings and helpline • SCOPE information on care, education, work, housing and more during coronavirus • Rdash BSL videos on staying alert and coronavirus FAQs • Action on hearing loss coronavirus information and support	• https://signhealth.org.uk/resources/coronavirus/ • https://www.rnib.org.uk/coronavirus-updates • https://www.scope.org.uk/coronavirus-information/ • https://www.rdash.nhs.uk/support-and-advice/coronavirus-information/coronavirus-british-sign-language/ • https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk/coronavirus-response/

Frequently Asked Questions

Sample FAQs from parents, pupils/students, staff

Please find attached sample FAQs and reactive lines to be used in your communication with parents, pupils/students, staff about the testing activity happening in your school/college.

If you have any questions that you don't feel able to answer, please contact your Test and Trace engagement lead.

If you have an urgent query or you or your school / college are approached by a member of the media, please contact pressofficenewsdesk@dhsc.gov.uk in the first instance.

Please find sample FAQs in the separate attachment

Thank you