

## **COVID-19 testing over May half-term**

As lockdown eases, taking a rapid COVID-19 test twice a week, even if you do not have symptoms, will help us stay ahead of the spread of the virus, particularly as new strains appear. Around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 have no symptoms and are spreading the virus without knowing. This includes those who have had their vaccine.

We want to thank you for your continued support in testing. Over 40 million tests with staff and students have now been conducted as part of the education testing programme.

Please continue to encourage your staff and secondary school or college students to test twice-weekly over half-term and test before returning to school or college after the holiday. Template letters are available on the [secondary schools and colleges document sharing platform](#) to help you communicate to staff, students and parents the importance of COVID-19 testing over half-term.

The result of a rapid test could be positive, negative or even void. But whatever it is, it should be reported straight away, every time. Recording all test results helps scientists stay ahead of the virus by spotting new outbreaks quickly and advising how to respond.

Reporting results is easy. Go to [report a COVID-19 lateral flow test result](#) or call 119 free from a mobile or landline. Lines are open every day, 7am to 11pm. Support is offered in 200 languages as well as British Sign Language and Live Video Assistance.

## **Contact tracing over May half-term**

Schools and colleges continue to play an important role in contact tracing for pupils, students and staff. We recognise the challenges of this responsibility during holidays, but this remains vitally important in the continued national effort to limit the spread of the virus.

Where pupils, students or staff test positive for COVID-19 during half-term, having developed symptoms more than 2 days since being in

school or college, no action is needed. Staff, young people, parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace. However, where pupils, students or staff test positive having developed symptoms within 2 days of being in school or college, you are asked to assist in identifying close contacts and advising self-isolation, as the individual may have been infectious whilst in school or college.

Staff responsible for contact tracing are not asked to be on-call at all times and may designate a limited period in the day to receive notification of positive cases and advise close contacts to self-isolate (this can be done by text or email).

Where schools or colleges can do so, staff assuming responsibility for contact tracing during half-term can be offered equivalent time off at an agreed point during term time.

The Department for Education COVID-19 helpline and the PHE Advice Service will remain open over May half-term to answer any questions you have about COVID-19 relating to education settings.