

DUDLEY ACADEMIES TRUST

Lateral Flow Testing – FAQs

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At Dudley Academies Trust our major priority remains the health, safety and wellbeing of all of our learners and staff. We are continuing to assess the risk to learners and staff on an ongoing basis and we are working hard to keep our academies as safe as possible.

You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID-19 tests, and our academies will be implementing this programme with effect from January.

We know that you may have questions about the testing programme so we have developed this document to give your further information and answer some frequently asked questions about the test.

What is lateral flow testing?

Lateral flow devices (LFDs) are one of the new tools being used to help detect and fight Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Lateral flow antigen tests are a new kind of technology that are used to test a higher proportion of [asymptomatic people](#). Testing better enables the academy to identify asymptomatic cases who are at high likelihood of spreading the virus and break the chain of transmission.

Lateral flow antigen tests detect the presence or absence of COVID-19 by applying a swab or saliva sample to the device's absorbent pad. The sample runs along the surface of the pad, showing a visual positive or negative result dependant on the presence of the virus. The tests have been validated by [Public Health England](#). They are safe and offer reliable results.

Are these new tests accurate?

Extensive clinical evaluation of the lateral flow tests, conducted by [Oxford University and Public Health England](#), has confirmed (Lateral Flow tests) are **highly reliable, sensitive and accurate** in multiple settings. By using these tests, we can quickly identify people who may not be displaying symptoms but have a high viral load and are the most likely to spread the virus further.

Are tests compulsory?

No. The tests are **not compulsory**. However, we hope the large majority of staff do participate in the programme and that parents/carers do give their consent for their child to take part. This will help the academy to identify learners and staff who have COVID-19 before they develop symptoms and will help to reduce the number of people they spread it to, reducing the transmission rate.

Why should I take the test?

This will help the academy to **identify people who have COVID-19 before they develop symptoms** and will help to reduce the number of people they spread it to, reducing the transmission rate. The more the transmission rate is reduced the quicker we will be able to get back to normal.

Why should I get tested if I have no symptoms?

The testing is designed to detect the level of virus in individuals who do not experience and show any symptoms (they are asymptomatic), but who could still be infectious and pass the virus to others. By taking part in the testing, you will **help to stop the spread of the virus, protect other people and ultimately save lives**.

Why would I take the test? If positive, I'll have to self-isolate. Why would I take the risk?

It is of the utmost importance that we all do our bit to stop the spread of the virus and protect other members of our academy and the wider community. The development of lateral flow testing could be a real step forward in the ability to contain COVID-19. If you do test positive for COVID-19 you should follow the [guidelines](#) and self-isolate. Self-isolation, whilst disruptive for those affected, is an **essential part of the fight against the virus**.

Does the testing system mean that the academy will stop the other safety measures put in place to combat the spread of COVID-19?

No. **All the other safety precautions must remain in place** and we all need to work together to remain vigilant and follow the other safety measures we have already implemented.

What does the test involve?

The test is a Lateral Flow Test. That involves a **swab of the throat and nose** to collect a sample which is inserted into a tube of liquid for a short time (please see the 'How to do your test instruction leaflet'). Drops of liquid are added to the test strip and after 30 minutes a result will be shown. Learners are supported to administer the test on themselves.

Who will be doing the testing?

Fully trained members of the academy staff team will be supervising the tests, supported by volunteers. These members of staff will be trained to support learners in self-administering their tests.

How quickly will we know the results of the test?

We will know the outcome of the test **within 30 minutes** and the academy will contact parents/carers if their child tests positive or has to isolate.

Can my family get tested too?

Testing is specifically aimed at academy learners and staff. If family members experience COVID-19 symptoms, they must follow standard [government guidance](#), including self-isolating immediately and booking a test through [gov.uk](#).

If I test positive what happens next?

Together with the rest of your household you will have to **immediately self-isolate**. The academy will contact parents/carers to pick up their child who will have to self-isolate with the rest of their household. The individual who has tested positive will then need to **book a standard Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) COVID-19 test** at a local test centre where a test will be able to confirm the positive Lateral Flow test result. These PCR tests are processed in a laboratory.

Does this mean the lateral flow tests are inaccurate?

There is a **low chance of false positive tests** – that is why the secondary test is necessary. If you receive a positive test result on the Lateral Flow test at the academy and then test negative on the PCR test, you will be able to come return to the academy and will not need to self-isolate. There is also a low chance that lateral flow tests do not pick up positive cases because they are not as sensitive as lab-based tests. That is why there will be serial tests for close contacts of positive cases – they will be tested repeatedly over a number of days to ensure they are not positive.

Do people I live with have to self-isolate?

If you have a positive test, anyone you live with must self-isolate until **10 days after the date of your first test or after your symptoms began (if earlier)**, unless they are participating in the regular testing for contacts – in which case they will be given specific instructions on what they can and cannot do during this period.

What if I have been in contact with someone who tests positive?

If you have been in close contact with someone who tests positive, you will be notified, and you will need to be **tested every day for 7 days** in the academy.

Should I take this test if I have Covid-19 symptoms?

No. This testing programme is **only for people who do not have coronavirus symptoms**. If you develop symptoms (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) you must **immediately self-isolate**, and book a test by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. In an emergency dial 999.

If I have already tested positive for COVID-19 in the last few weeks, do I still need to undergo the test?

The advice we have been given is that we do not need to do the testing **within 90 days of a positive test**. **After 90 days** you do need to then have a test. However, if you would like to undergo the tests anyway, then we will support this decision.

Why do we have to maintain social distancing after a negative test?

After a negative test, an individual is **still susceptible to becoming infected and spreading the virus**. Respecting social distancing and other rules is the most powerful way of stopping the spread of the virus.