



25 November 2021

Dear Parent,

This is an update on plans to provide for the use of antigen testing in certain circumstances in children who are asymptomatic and part of a classroom pod, where there is a confirmed case of COVID-19.

The most important way to protect against any onward spread of infection is that if your child has any symptoms of COVID-19, including a new cough, shortness of breath, high temperature, sore throat, they should self-isolate at home and you should book a COVID-19 PCR test for them. PCR tests can be booked here:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/testing/get-tested/>

Children who have symptoms should not use antigen tests, they should stay at home and organise a PCR test for Covid-19. If a parent/guardian has any concerns about their child they should contact their GP, as per normal.

From 29 November 2021, if a parent or guardian receives a positive (detected) PCR COVID-19 test result for their child, we are asking that they contact their child's school principal immediately to let them know.

The principal will then tell this parent/guardian, that they will be contacting the parents of the other children in their child's pod, to give them details of how they can order free antigen tests for their children using a Freephone number. The principal is requested not to share any personal information relating to any other child with parents.

Antigen tests are potentially an extra measure to help protect against transmission of COVID-19 (coronavirus). You do the tests yourself at home. The test sample does not have to go to a lab. You usually get your results in 15 minutes.

If just one pod is involved, only the children in this pod will be offered antigen tests. If there are two pods with separate confirmed cases of COVID-19, then parents or guardians of children in the whole class will be contacted and provided with the information on how they can request antigen tests.

You will need to provide your child's name and home address together with the school's roll number, which will be provided by the school when contacting the Freephone number to order the test.



These tests will be delivered free of charge directly to the parent or guardian at their home address and the child's parent can decide if they want to do the tests. The HSE has prepared instructions and a video for parents. Full details will be in the antigen test pack.

The HSE advises that parents/guardians should carry out the first antigen test for their child on the day that they receive the test kit, they should do a second test 2 days later, and a third test 2 days after that.

The children in the pod of the confirmed COVID-19 case **can continue to attend school** as long as **they have no symptoms and they do not have a positive COVID-19 test result (antigen or PCR)**. If at any time, your child **develops symptoms they should isolate at home and you should book a COVID-19 PCR test for them**. Do this even if the antigen test has a negative (not detected) result.

If an antigen test is positive, it is important that your child isolates at home and that you book a COVID-19 PCR test online at the [HSE test portal](#).

A QR code will be provided to afford parents the opportunity to upload the result of a test result to inform the HSE. This information is very important to understand the Covid-19 pandemic.

School principals have been requested not to share any information with parents that might identify the positive COVID-19 case.

Participating in antigen testing is a voluntary programme, therefore it is not necessary for parents to share information with the school about whether they have requested antigen tests and undertaken negative tests.

Children who are well should continue to come to school whether they participate in antigen testing or not.

The decision to do antigen testing with your child is completely up to parents and guardians and will have no impact on your child's education or experience in school.

The voluntary programme of antigen testing is an additional measure and does not replace the very important public health measures currently in your school.



We continue to ask that you remind your children of the importance of these measures to stop spread of infection.

Yours faithfully

Deirdre Shanley
Assistant Secretary