

DCT FAQs



Test and Trace

Why does my child have to do a test for 7 school days?

Antigen lateral flow device (LFD) rapid tests are more accurate the more virus that is present. We know that the levels of virus in a person can change from the day of exposure, normally peaking around the onset of symptoms. By testing on school days for 7 consecutive days we can detect the vast majority of cases. Students must isolate during weekends and holidays.

How is the schools/colleges clinical trial being monitored?

The trial is being co-ordinated and managed by Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Department for Education (DfE) and Office of National Statistics and ethics cleared by PHE.

It will also be independently evaluated and overseen by an independent data monitoring committee and a trial steering group.

Should my child have an LFD if they previously tested positive?

Twice weekly testing is not needed for 90 days after testing positive. However even people who have recently tested positive need to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone testing positive for coronavirus. Therefore you may opt to do DCT with LFDs rather than self isolate if your school/college is in the Intervention Group of the study. If you test positive in DCT, you will have to self-isolate for ten days.

How accurate are the LFD tests?

LFDs perform best when levels of virus are at their highest. This means they are particularly useful as a means of finding infections in individuals who do not experience and show any symptoms, but who could still be infectious and pass the virus to others. LFDs are highly sensitive and test positive in the majority of people with high amounts of virus present.

If I don't want my child to do DCT, what happens?

DCT is not mandatory. If you do not wish your child to do DCT or stop mid-way through, your child will revert to the legal duty to self-isolate for the original 10-day period.

What if my child has an invalid result?

If the test is invalid, the participant should have another LFD test.

What if my child does not test positive?

If your child's daily test is not positive, it is likely that they are not infectious, and may continue with schools/colleges that day while following the simple guidance of Hands, Face and Space. In the evenings and at the weekend however, they must follow the government guidelines and self-isolate at home.

What if my child tests positive?

If the test is positive, you should assume your child has the virus, self-isolate immediately, and follow government guidelines.

What is Daily Contact Testing (DCT)?

Daily Contact Testing (DCT) is the regular, daily testing of **close contacts** of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19.

What is the benefit of taking part in this trial?

To keep students in face-to-face education for as much time as is possible.

To restrict self-isolation to a primary group of people (positive case) and reduce the impact of self-isolation to a secondary group of people (close contacts).

Why do LFD tests give 'false positives'?

LFDs give a very small number of false positive results out of every 1000 tests performed. LFDs are particularly useful as a means of finding infections in individuals who do not experience and show any symptoms, but who could still be infectious and pass the virus to others.

If my child is engaged in DCT, what can my household do?

They should continue about their day as per normal.

If your child tests positive or develops symptoms during the testing regimen, they should start self-isolating in line with government guidance.

How safe is DCT?

According to initial research, 7 days of DCT may prevent more additional transmission than quarantine if DCT is followed fully. DCT has potential advantages of tracking more contacts earlier, whether they have symptoms or not. DCT may also reduce the social and economic burden of quarantine on contacts. In school-type settings, mass testing and DCT are shown to be more effective at reducing infections than year-group isolation in initial studies. The purpose of DCT in schools/colleges is to confirm these early findings in a larger group.

