

## **RE: NEW ANTIGEN TESTING PROGRAMME**

29 November 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I'm writing to you with information about the government's new antigen testing programme for schools which commences today.

**Please note that the government's advice continues to be that 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/>

**Also, according to government advice, 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.**

So here's the latest plan:

- From today (29 November onwards), if you receive a positive (detected) PCR COVID-19 test result for your son(s), you're requested to contact me immediately with this information. You can do so via Class Dojo, email or through the school office (062-61833).
- I will then contact the parents of the other children in your son's pod (table) to give them details of how they can order free antigen tests for their boys using a Freephone number.
- I will not be sharing any personal information relating to any other child with parents.

PLEASE be assured that I will also continue to inform the parents of the entire class of any positive PCR tests in the classroom. Furthermore, as a result of current delays in booking PCR tests and getting results, our school believes it is only fair & proper to inform parents of any *positive antigen tests in a classroom* if parents choose to share that information with us. Again, no names will be used. Could I also ask that you wrap up your boys very well for school. It's an airborne virus and we've got windows open.

Thank you everyone. It's a difficult and anxious time but we're doing our very best to remain happy & positive for our boys. They've only one childhood & the staff & I are keeping things as normal as possible and look forward with hope to Christmas and the New Year.



## **FURTHER DETAIL ON THE PROGRAMME FROM THE DEPARTMENT**

- 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

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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.