



## Message to Schools re: urgent testing

We are aware that recently there have been some problems with accessing COVID-19 tests. This is not an issue unique to Cornwall and is a result of national laboratory capacity being stretched and having to prioritise analysing tests from areas with a higher prevalence of COVID-19 cases. In light of this, we have been working to secure temporary access to urgent testing when attempts via 119 and online remain unsuccessful.

It is important now more than ever that **only** individuals who have **at least one** of the 3 main symptoms of COVID-19 that should undergo testing. These are:

- **A high temperature**
- **A new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- **A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste**

You can find out more here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>. It is not necessary or of benefit for household members and identified contacts to undergo testing if they do not have symptoms, unless they are specifically asked to do so by a public health or healthcare professional.

Parents/carers of children, older students, and staff members should continue to try and access testing via the normal channels, which are either dialling 119 or by booking online at [www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test](http://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test).

If they remain unable to book a test, then you can provide them with this email address: [d-ccg.cornwalldevon.urgenttesting@nhs.net](mailto:d-ccg.cornwalldevon.urgenttesting@nhs.net). They should make it clear the test is either for a child attending an education setting or a member of education staff, and they will be supported to access local testing.

If testing can still not be accessed via this method, then schools with their own test kits could consider providing one of these to the parent/carer or staff member, depending on the time elapsed since the onset of symptoms as it is important to be tested within the first 5 days.

Parents should be reminded not to contact their GP if their child has symptoms of COVID-19, and to follow the national testing and isolation guidance. Parents should however seek advice from their GP or from 111 if they are concerned about their child's health.

Thank you for all you are doing to support children through this time. If you have any queries or require support, please get in touch with us via [phdesk@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:phdesk@cornwall.gov.uk).