



Guidance for Deployment of Lateral Flow Tests

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
Centres and Schools in the Cayman Islands

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This guidance document forms part of the NATIONAL POLICY ON THE USE OF ANTIGEN-DETECTING RAPID DIAGNOSTIC TESTS ("LATERAL FLOW TESTS") and has been reviewed by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, the Public Health Department, Department of Education Services, the Chief Medical Officer and other relevant stakeholders. The information contained within the document will be reviewed regularly and republished when new information becomes available and/or procedures change.

Introduction and Rationale

Many children with the SARS-CoV-2 virus (commonly referred to as COVID-19) are asymptomatic. Therefore, their infections may be difficult to detect without regular testing. Given that many children are not yet eligible for vaccination, screening using antigen-detecting rapid diagnostic tests (“lateral flow tests” or “LFT”) is being introduced for children, staff and teachers of educational institutions in both government and private schools. For avoidance of doubt, educational institutions means early childhood care and education (ECCE) centres; schools; and post compulsory educational organisations such as colleges or universities.

This testing programme is being implemented by the Cayman Islands Government as a mitigation strategy, to decrease the risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission in the ECCE centres and school environments. The testing will allow ECCE centres and schools to promptly identify cases amongst children and staff so that measures can be taken to prevent further transmission. Being able to reassure parents and staff about the safety of in-person learning is one of the key benefits anticipated from this screening programme.

In accordance with the Children Law (2012 Revision), child as referenced in this policy is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years.

Screening Using Lateral Flow Tests: Part of a Layered Approach for Safe In-Person Learning

To promote safer in-person learning and care, this screening programme must be implemented as part of a layered approach within each education setting. Therefore, in conjunction with the screening programme, all ECCE centres and schools are expected to implement other recommended prevention strategies that include:

- promoting vaccination in eligible school-aged children, staff and teachers;
- consistent and correct use of masks;
- physical distancing;
- improved ventilation;
- handwashing and respiratory etiquette;
- staying home when sick and getting tested; and
- routine cleaning with disinfection.

The screening programme will be supported by contact tracing in combination with isolation by the Public Health Department (PH).

Using Lateral Flow Tests to Reduce the Number of Primary Contacts Required to Isolate

In addition to screening, the Public Health Department (PH) will also use the lateral flow tests to implement serial testing daily regimes for the primary contacts of any child who tests positive for SARS-CoV-2, as an alternative to isolation for those primary contacts who initially test negative. Primary contacts are considered persons within the classroom group, work group or household of an individual who tests positive.

This will help to limit wide-scale disruptions to in-person learning for children in the Cayman Islands. PH may also use lateral flow tests in the event of an outbreak of cases in schools, to successfully assist in quickly identifying potential positive cases in the school environment and within families.

Types of Tests to Be Used

The selection and use of lateral flow tests for the purpose of screening at ECCE centres and schools must comply with the criteria established in Control of COVID-19 (Testing) Regulations, 2021 under the **Public Health Act (2021 Revision)** and with the guidance provided by the National Policy on the Use of Antigen-Detecting Rapid Diagnostic Tests (“Lateral Flow Tests”) in the Cayman Islands.

Who Will Be Screened

In order to prevent additional spread of the virus within the ECCE centres or schools, screening is intended to identify persons infected with SARS-CoV-2 who have either no symptoms or mild symptoms and who might otherwise go undetected. Unless otherwise guided by Public Health, the recommended age for persons to be screened with LFTS is 2 years and older.

Screening is not intended for persons who are symptomatic. In line with Public Health advice, persons with symptoms should stay home when sick. Any person with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 disease should contact their local healthcare provider or the **Flu Hotline** to seek advice on the best next steps. The Flu Hotline can be reached on **1-800-534-8600** or **947-3077** (Digicel), or email flu@hsa.ky.

Screening is not intended for persons who have recovered from laboratory confirmed (via a PCR test) COVID-19 within the past 90 days and are asymptomatic. To avoid false positive test results, they should follow the advice of the Public Health Department on how to conduct future testing (including screening tests).

What are the Costs for Screening of Staff and Children at ECCE Centres and Schools

Screening using lateral flow tests is **recommended** for staff and teachers in ECCE centres and schools, both Government and private. All test kits will be provided by the Government and are free of charge.

Screening using lateral flow tests is **recommended** for children in ECCE centres and schools, both Government and private. All test kits will be provided by the Government and are free of charge.

Supplies of test kits will initially be provided to staff/teachers and children. In the event of an outbreak or a positive case, additional supplies will be provided for use by staff, teachers, and children as required.

Requirements for Implementing the Screening Programme

ECCE centres and private schools may choose to introduce screening testing, using the lateral flow tests provided in different ways. For example, they can:

- set up their own onsite testing by staff to be trained for this purpose, or hire a third party provider to do the testing; or
- implement the screening testing programme as an at-home testing solution, where tests specifically designed to be self-administered may be carried out by children aged 12 years or older (*under parental supervision as needed*), or by parents or guardians where the child is under the age of 12 years.

In the case of government schools, the screening testing programme will be introduced primarily as a home-testing solution. This arrangement will be subject to review and a revised approach may be taken in due course, based on the outcome of that review.

Screening in both government and private schools should be implemented in line with the requirements of this strategy and the National Policy, and any additional guidance provided by the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Health in relation to implementing a screening test regime within early childhood educational centres or schools.

How Lateral Flow Tests Should Be Administered

Routine screening of staff/teachers and children should be conducted irrespective of whether or not they are not fully vaccinated, as follows:

- The testing should be conducted **twice weekly**, with each test to be taken **within a minimum of three days of each other**.

- Within a regular testing schedule to be set by the school, establish specific days on which testing should take place in order to establish a regular routine and to facilitate a cascade reporting of test results.

Parents may choose to conduct additional tests at home that are in excess of the number of tests carried out by the educational institution and/or at different intervals, for their own purposes. Under these circumstances:

- The costs of these tests will be borne by parents;
- Parents are **not required** to provide the results of these tests to PH, **unless there is a positive test result**;
- In this event that there is a positive test result, parents are required to follow the Public Health protocols for reporting a positive test result, and keep their child at home.

When Lateral Flow Tests May Be Administered by Public Health

Lateral flow tests may be used by Public Health for diagnostic purposes, as part of an outbreak investigation and response. Where lateral flow tests are used by PH for this purpose:

- The tests will be administered to affected staff and children regardless of vaccination status.
- These lateral flow tests will form part of a Public Health strategy to:
 - » Provide a more rapid response for identifying persons actively infected with SARS-CoV-2 virus, to help guide clinical and infection control decisions.
 - » Reduce the number of staff, children and families required to isolate as a result of a positive case.

Evaluating the Results of Lateral Flow Tests

Where a child tests positive

If a child tests **positive** on a lateral flow test, the child must not attend school, must isolate and must follow PH protocols for reporting the positive result. School policy for reporting an absence should be followed and arrangements should be made with the school for remote learning. PH will advise when it is safe for the child to return to school.

Where the members of the child's household are **vaccinated**, each individual should conduct daily lateral flow tests for 10 days. If an individual receives a negative LFT result, that individual can attend school/work if daily results continue to be negative. If an individual receives a positive LFT result, that individual must:

- stay at home and
- contact Public Health immediately.

If an individual is unable to test, they are required to isolate for 10 days.

Where the members of the child's household are **NOT vaccinated**, and they are 18 years of age or older, they are to isolate for 14 days. PH must be notified. Public Health will confirm the date for release from isolation. Unvaccinated children under 18 years old residing in the household can continue to go to school if daily LFT result is negative. Daily LFT testing must continue until all positive cases in the household are cleared by Public Health.

Where a child tests negative

If a child tests **negative** on a lateral flow test, the child may attend school. Where PH reporting requirements for negative tests are in place these should be followed.

Where a member of a household, other than a child, tests positive

If a member of a household tests **positive** on a lateral flow test, the individual - regardless of the individual's

vaccination status - must isolate immediately and follow PH protocols for reporting the positive result. Parent/guardian should report the positive result in the household to the child's school. PH will advise when it is safe for the individual to be released from isolation.

Where the other members of his/her household are **vaccinated**, each individual, including children, should conduct daily LFT testing for 10 days. If an individual receives a negative LFT result, that individual can attend school/work if daily results continue to be negative. If an individual receives a positive LFT result, that individual must:

- stay at home and
- contact Public Health immediately.

If an individual is unwilling to test, they are required to isolate for 10 days.

Where the other members of his/her household are **NOT vaccinated**, and they are 18 years of age or older, they are to isolate for 14 days. PH must be notified. Public Health will confirm the date for release from isolation. Unvaccinated children residing in the household who are under 18 years old can continue to go to school if daily LFT is negative.

Where a classmate or teacher/staff member tests positive

Once a classmate or teacher/staff member tests **positive**, a *surveillance period* is in effect for all children and teachers/staff members for that class and testing will be carried out daily. This surveillance period will continue until no positive results are received for **10 consecutive days**.

If another child or teacher/staff member tests **positive** during the 10-day surveillance period, the surveillance period resets and continues until there are no positive cases for 10 consecutive days.

Follow-up testing, using a laboratory-based PCR test may be conducted by the Public Health Department.

However, a positive or inconclusive/equivocal lateral flow test should be treated as indicating someone is very likely to have SARS-CoV-2.

During this surveillance period individuals are also required to monitor their symptoms, and should they become symptomatic, even if the LFT result is negative, they should immediately isolate and contact PH.

It should be noted that if a parent/guardian is contacted by Public Health and he/she and their child are instructed to self-isolate, a negative lateral flow test cannot be used to override the Public Health instruction in accordance with the **Public Health Act (2021 Revision)** and any relevant regulations.

Guidance During Surveillance Periods

Guidance for children during surveillance period

During this surveillance period, the children affected should conduct daily lateral flow tests until the surveillance period has ended (*i.e. no positive cases for 10 consecutive days*).

- If a child receives a **negative** LFT result, that individual can attend school if daily results continue to be negative.
- If a child tests **positive**, the child must not attend school and must follow PH protocols for reporting the positive result. School policy for reporting an absence should be followed and arrangements should be made with the school for remote learning. PH will advise when it is safe for the child to return to school.

Guidance for teachers/staff members

During this surveillance period where teachers/staff members affected are **vaccinated**, they should conduct daily lateral flow tests until the surveillance period has ended (*i.e. no positive cases for 10 consecutive days*).

- If a teacher/staff member receives a **negative** LFT result, that individual can attend work if daily results continue to be negative.

- If a teacher/staff member tests **positive**, the individual must isolate immediately and follow PH protocols for reporting the positive result. PH will advise when it is safe for the individual to be released from isolation.
- If a teacher is unable to test, they are required to isolate for 10 days.

During this surveillance period where a teacher/staff member is affected are **NOT vaccinated**, they are to isolate for 14 days. PH should be notified and a negative PCR is required for release from isolation. Public Health to advise date of PCR test and will confirm final approval for release.

Guidance for members of the child's household

During this surveillance period where the members of the affected child's household **are vaccinated**, they should conduct daily LFT testing until the surveillance period has ended (*i.e. no positive cases for 10 consecutive days*).

- If an individual receives a **negative** LFT result, that individual can attend school/work if daily results continue to be negative.
- If an individual tests **positive**, the individual must isolate immediately and follow PH protocols for reporting the positive result. PH will advise when it is safe for the individual to be released from isolation.
- If an individual is unable to test, they are required to isolate for 10 days.

During this surveillance period where the household members affected are **NOT vaccinated**, and they are 18 years of age or older, they are to isolate for 14 days. PH should be notified and a negative PCR is required for release from isolation. Public Health to advise date of PCR test and will confirm final approval for release. Unvaccinated children residing in the household under 18 years old can continue to go to school if daily LFT is negative.

Where a parent/guardian suspects a child has had close contact with a person who has tested positive

A parent/guardian should notify the school and conduct daily lateral flow tests on the child for 10 days. If the child receives a **negative** LFT result, that individual can attend school if daily results continue to be negative.

If a child tests **positive**, the child must not attend school and must follow PH protocols for reporting the positive result. School policy for reporting an absence should be followed and arrangements should be made with the school for remote learning. PH will advise when it is safe for the child to return to school.

Reporting Requirements for the Results of Positive Lateral Flow Tests

The results of **any positive tests** for a member of staff or child/student from any educational institution **must be reported** to **Public Health** in accordance with the **Public Health Act (2021 Revision)**, which indicates that SARS-CoV-2 is a notifiable disease that is **required** to be reported to the Medical Officer of Health, as soon as he/she becomes aware of the positive test results.

A webform has been developed for reporting purposes with details as specified by Public Health and may be accessed [here](#). However, if a person who does not have access to the webform, a person should contact their local healthcare provider or the **Flu Hotline** to report a positive and seek advice on the best next steps. The Flu Hotline can be reached on **1-800-534-8600** or **947-3077** (Digicel), or email flu@hsa.ky.

Public Health Contact Information

24 Hour Flu Hotline: **1-800-534-8600** or 947-3077

Email: flu@hsa.ky

Positive Results Reporting: www.gov.ky/report-covid19-result





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