

For parents/carers: rapid antigen testing program

The Department of Education and Training is working with the Department of Health to use at-home rapid antigen testing of unvaccinated primary close contacts (PCCs) to safely enable an earlier return to school. This will enable unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students to return to school after a seven-day quarantine, instead of a 14-day quarantine, by participating in this program.

When to do a rapid antigen test

Your child (who is unvaccinated, or partially vaccinated) has been identified as a potential primary close contact (PCC) of a confirmed COVID-19 case. You may have received or still be waiting for advice from the Department of Health to confirm your quarantine period.

The at-home rapid antigen testing program is for:

- students who are primary close contacts – **it is not for household primary close contacts (who live in the same household as a person with COVID-19).**
- unvaccinated and partially vaccinated primary close contacts only. Vaccinated primary close contacts are already able to leave isolation after seven days and a negative day six PCR test.
- the purpose of attending the school the student is enrolled at only. Students cannot attend education activities offsite. Students must otherwise stay at home for their period of self - quarantine.

If you want to take part in the at-home rapid antigen testing program

The at-home rapid antigen testing program is an opt-in program. Please read this information about rapid antigen testing to help you decide whether your child should participate.

By reading this information and then following these steps you are consenting to participate in the program:

- Your child must quarantine at home for seven days from the date on which the close contact occurred (day 0).
- On day six of quarantine, your child must get a standard (PCR) test at your local [COVID-19 testing site](#). If the PCR test is negative, provide the results to your child's school.
- Your child can then return to school from day eight with a 'test to stay'.
- Your child must complete a rapid antigen test at home on school days between days 8 and 14 each morning.
- You must send the test result to your school using the [e-form](#) provided each day. This must be sent prior to your child attending school and no later than 8:30am.

If you choose not to take part in the rapid antigen testing program

- Your child must quarantine at home for 14 days.
- On day 13 of quarantine, your child must get a standard (PCR) test at your local [COVID-19 testing site](#). If the test is negative, provide the results to your child's school.

- Then, your child can return to school after completing 14 days of quarantine.

If your child has been fully vaccinated, they do not need to participate in the rapid antigen testing program

- Vaccinated students must quarantine at home for seven days.
- On day six of quarantine, your child must get a standard (PCR) test at your local [COVID-19 testing site](#). If the test is negative, provide the results to your child's school.
- Your child can return to school on day eight.

How to perform a rapid antigen test on your child

There are different types of rapid antigen self-tests that can be used at home. Your school has provided you with **Roche rapid antigen self-tests**. Follow [the instructions](#) in your kit, as they may differ from other types of tests.

Read the [full instructions](#) included in your kit before starting the test.

Watch the video: [Test yourself for COVID-19 with our rapid antigen self-test](#).




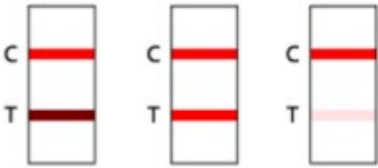

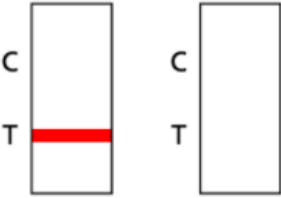
Children who are 12-17 years old who want to do the test themselves should be supervised to ensure they correctly follow the steps. Children under 12 will need a parent or guardian to perform the test on them.

Interpreting your child's rapid antigen test result

If your child's result is negative, it will appear as a single red line, next to the C on the test. It means that it is unlikely your child has COVID-19, especially if they have no symptoms. If your child does not have symptoms, they do not need to get a standard (PCR) test. If your child has symptoms, they must get a standard PCR test to be sure.

If your child's result is positive, it will appear as two red lines, next to the C and T on the test. It means that it is likely your child has COVID-19. Your child should isolate and get a standard (PCR) test immediately. When you get the standard (PCR) test, tell the testing site about your child's positive rapid antigen test

If your child's result is invalid, it will appear as either a single red line next to the T on the test, or no lines at all. It means that you have to repeat the test. If you get another invalid result your child needs to get a standard (PCR) test. If the standard (PCR) test is positive, follow the positive result instructions above. If the standard (PCR) test is negative, follow the negative result instructions above.

How your child's result will appear	What it means	What to do next
 <p>NEGATIVE</p> 	<p>It is unlikely your child has COVID-19, especially if they have no symptoms.</p>	<p>Does your child have symptoms?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes: your child must get a standard (PCR) test to be sure. • No: your child does not need to get a standard (PCR) test.
 <p>POSITIVE</p> 	<p>It is likely your child has COVID-19.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your child should isolate immediately. • Your child must get a standard (PCR) test immediately. • Tell the testing site about your child's positive rapid antigen test.
 <p>INVALID</p> 	<p>No result</p> <p>The test has not worked. You need to repeat the test.</p>	<p>Repeat the test</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invalid again? Get a standard (PCR) test. • Positive: follow the positive result instructions. • Negative: follow the negative result instructions.

If your child gets a positive result on a rapid antigen test

A positive result on a rapid antigen test means it's likely your child has COVID-19, especially if they have symptoms.

If your child gets a positive result, they must follow these steps.

- Isolate at home immediately. Do not leave home unless for COVID testing or to seek medical care.

- Get a standard (PCR) test to confirm the result as soon as possible at a [testing site](#) or through your healthcare provider.
- Stay isolated until they get their standard (PCR) test result.
- You must report your child's positive rapid antigen test result to your school using the [e-form](#) provided.

You can tell other household members, or other people you may have seen outside the home about your child's positive rapid antigen test result, but they don't need to take action until your child's standard (PCR) test confirms they have COVID-19.

After your child's follow-up standard (PCR) test, they must follow these steps.

- If your child gets a **positive result** from the standard (PCR) test, then they have COVID-19. If your child has COVID-19, see [what to do](#).
- If your child gets a **negative result** from the standard (PCR) test, they can leave isolation and return to school. Your child must continue to have at home rapid antigen tests every school day until 14 days after the original exposure date.

Please contact your school directly when you have received the results from your child's standard (PCR) result.

If your child gets a negative result on a rapid antigen test

A negative result on a rapid antigen test means it's less likely your child has COVID-19. Only a standard (PCR) test can tell more accurately so if your child has COVID-19 symptoms, they must isolate and get a standard (PCR) test.

You must report your child's negative rapid antigen test result to your school using the [e-form](#) provided prior to your child attending school and no later than 8:30am.

If your child gets an invalid result on a rapid antigen test

The test has not worked. You may have collected your nasal swab incorrectly or the test may have some manufacturing defects, so you will need to do another test.

Please refer to the instructions or call the Department of Education and Training COVID-19 hotline (1800 338 663) if you have questions about how to complete the test.

If you get an invalid result on the second rapid antigen test, your child must get a standard (PCR) test and cannot return to school until they have returned a negative PCR test result. You must continue to complete rapid antigen testing each morning prior to school on weekdays.

Reporting your child's rapid antigen test result

You must report your child's rapid antigen test result to their school every school day morning between days 8 and 14, no matter what the result.

Report your child's test results to your school using the [e-form](#) provided on school days between days 8 and 14 each morning and prior to your child attending school (no later than 8.30am).

If you send your child to school without completing a rapid antigen test or reporting the result to your school, you will be contacted to immediately collect your child to perform a rapid antigen test.

Your child will not be able to attend school after their first seven days of isolation if they are not participating in the rapid antigen test program and they will need to stay in quarantine for 14 days.

If you need help to perform the test

Contact the Department of Education and Training's COVID-19 hotline (1800 338 663) for general advice and support about at-home rapid antigen testing.

If you're having difficulty performing the test on your child, it might help to:

- talk them through the steps
- encourage them to remain calm
- get another person to help you.

Consent

At-home rapid antigen testing

The at-home rapid antigen testing program is an opt-in program for unvaccinated, or partially vaccinated students who are PCCs.

Your school will provide you with rapid antigen test kits. You do not need to buy test kits.

You have been provided information about rapid antigen testing to help you decide whether your child should participate in this program. By participating in this program, you are consenting for your child to attend school after completing seven days of quarantine, conditional on getting a standard PCR test on day six of quarantine and returning a negative result, and completing a rapid antigen test at home on each school day between days 8 and 14. To attend school you must return a negative test result each day before arriving at school, and report that result no later than 8:30am.

Privacy

You need to complete an online form. This form will collect details about your child and their test results as well as your contact details as their parent/carer.

Schools will use this information to:

- implement rapid antigen testing in the best ways possible
- safely oversee implementation of the rapid antigen testing program
- enable students to return to school earlier
- make sure students follow their quarantine requirements

demonstrate maintenance of a system to collect, hold and record necessary information

- learn about how children and families find using the rapid antigen testing in their homes.

The information will be received and managed by the school leadership team, plus any other staff required to assist in managing this process.

Department of Education and Training staff supporting schools and coordinating the program will also have access to this information. This information may be used to support monitoring and evaluation of the rapid antigen testing program.

Information may be provided to the Department of Health to assist with contact tracing.

The information may also be reported to other Victorian government bodies or Parliament. Your child's details and your details will be anonymous and confidential. The information will be given to the government or Parliament as anonymous and grouped information only, as part of supporting

and providing information on the Victorian government's response to COVID-19. Your information will be stored in a secure system. This will be managed by the Department of Education and Training and/or the school. Any hardcopies will be stored in a secure location at the school.

For more information about how your information is handled in this process, you can refer to the data collection statement.

For more information regarding the department's and school's handling of personal information, please read the School's Privacy Policy.

Further information

- Contact the Department of Education's COVID-19 hotline (1800 338 663) if you have questions about how rapid antigen testing can support your child's early return to school, including general advice and support about how to complete at home testing.
- Visit [Rapid antigen self-tests](#) on the coronavirus.vic.gov website for more information about self-testing at home.
- Watch the video: [Test yourself for COVID-19 with our rapid antigen self-test](#).
- Read [the Roche rapid antigen test instructions](#).

Rapid antigen testing program FAQs

What is the at-home rapid antigen testing program?

From Monday 15 November, the Department of Education will implement a statewide roll-out of a rapid antigen testing program for any students deemed Primary Close Contacts (PCCs) at any new COVID-19 exposures on school sites.

The program will use at-home rapid antigen testing to safely enable an earlier return to school. Participating in this program will also enable unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students to return to school after a seven-day quarantine, instead of a 14-day quarantine.

My child is a primary close contact. What do I need to do?

The at-home rapid antigen testing program is an opt-in program for unvaccinated, or partially vaccinated students. Your school will provide you with the rapid antigen test kits. You do not need to buy these test kits.

Following an exposure at school, you will be notified that your child (who is unvaccinated, or partially vaccinated) has been identified as a primary close contact (PCC) of a confirmed COVID-19 case. Your school will advise you if it is participating in the at-home rapid antigen testing program.

If you want to take part in the at-home rapid antigen testing program, your child must quarantine at home for seven days. On day six of quarantine, your child must get a standard (PCR) test at your local COVID-19 testing site. If the test is negative, provide the results to your child's school. Your child can return to school on day eight.

In order to return to school from day eight, your child must complete rapid antigen tests at home on school days between days 8 and 14, and return a negative test result each day. You must notify your school of your child's test result each day via the [web-based form](#). If your child's test result is negative, your child can return to school that day.

If your child returns a positive test, you must keep them at home and take them for a standard (PCR) test at your local testing site. Your child cannot return to school until they return a negative standard (PCR) test.

If your child returns an invalid rapid antigen test, perform a second rapid antigen test. If the second rapid antigen test is invalid, you will need to keep your child home and take them for a standard (PCR) test. Your child cannot return to school unless they return a negative standard (PCR) test.

If my child has been vaccinated, do they need to participate in the rapid antigen testing program?

Vaccinated students do not need to participate in the rapid antigen testing program but must quarantine at home for seven days. On day six of quarantine, your child must get a standard (PCR) test at your local COVID-19 testing site. If the test is negative, you need to provide the results to your child's school. Your child can return to school on day eight.

Will non-government schools be included in the statewide roll-out?

Yes. We are working with the non-government school sector to support roll-out to all schools.

Testing

What is rapid antigen testing?

Rapid antigen tests can help check if you have COVID-19. These tests can be done at home by yourself. Most rapid antigen tests will provide you with a result in 15 to 30 minutes.

How is it different to standard PCR COVID-19 testing?

Rapid antigen tests are self-administered COVID-19 tests that can be used at home. They can tell you if you are likely, or not likely, to have COVID-19.

Rapid antigen tests are not as accurate as standard PCR tests, and some cases will be missed. The accuracy of the test depends on how well the sample was taken and what stage you are in an infection. Rapid antigen tests are also more effective in people with symptoms and in people in the middle phase of their infection. The Victorian Government recommends standard (PCR) testing to diagnose COVID-19. PCR testing is free and available to all Victorians at [many locations](#).

Rapid antigen testing does not replace standard (PCR) testing for the purpose of diagnosis of COVID-19 in children, staff and students with symptoms, regardless of their vaccination status.

Parents should continue to follow current school policy and public health advice; if your child is unwell, even with the mildest of symptoms, they must stay at home and get tested for COVID-19 with a standard (PCR) test, regardless of a negative rapid antigen test result.

How do I conduct the test?

There are different types of rapid antigen self-tests that can be used at home. Your school has provided you with **Roche rapid antigen self-tests**. Follow [the instructions](#) in your kit, as they may differ from other types of tests.

Can my child self-administer the test?

Children who are 12 to 17 years old who want to do the test themselves should be supervised to ensure they correctly follow the steps correctly. Children under 12 years will need a parent or guardian to perform the test on them.

What does a positive result mean?

A positive result means it's likely your child has COVID-19, especially if they have symptoms.

If your child gets a positive result, they must:

- isolate at home immediately
- get a standard (PCR) test to confirm the result as soon as possible at a [testing site](#) or through your healthcare provider
- stay isolated at home until they get their standard (PCR) test result.

After your child's follow-up standard (PCR) test:

- if your child gets a **positive result** from the standard (PCR) test, then they have COVID-19. If your child has COVID-19, see [what to do](#)
- if your child gets a **negative result** from the standard (PCR) test, they can leave isolation and return to school. Your child must continue to have at-home rapid antigen tests every second day until 14 days after the original exposure date.

You must report your child's rapid antigen test result and standard (PCR) test result to your school.

You can tell other household members, or other people you may have seen outside the home, about your child's positive rapid antigen test result if you want to, but they don't need to take any formal action until your child's standard (PCR) test confirms they have COVID-19.

A positive rapid antigen test result means it is **likely** your child has COVID-19. They will need to isolate immediately, and also get an immediate standard (PCR) test. When you do this, be sure to tell the testing site about your child's positive rapid antigen test.

When can my child return to school with a positive test result?

If your child gets a positive result, they must:

- isolate at home immediately
- get a standard (PCR) test to confirm the result as soon as possible at a [testing site](#) or through your healthcare provider
- stay isolated until they get their standard (PCR) test result.

After your child's follow-up standard (PCR) test:

- if your child gets a **positive result** from the standard (PCR) test, then they have COVID-19. If your child has COVID-19, the Department of Health will provide you with further advice. Your child cannot return to school until the Department of Health has advised of release dates following an isolation period.

You must report your child's rapid antigen test result and standard (PCR) test result to your school.

What does a negative result mean?

A negative result means it is less likely your child has COVID-19. A standard (PCR) test can tell accurately whether your child has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19.

If your child has COVID-19 symptoms, they must get a standard (PCR) test.

If your child has been further exposed to COVID-19 (beyond the original school exposure), they must get a standard (PCR) test.

You must report your child's negative rapid antigen test result to your school so your child can return to school.

It is unlikely your child has COVID-19, especially if they have no symptoms. If your child has symptoms, they must get a standard (PCR) test to be sure. If they don't have symptoms, they don't need to get a standard (PCR) test.

When can my child return to school with a negative test result?

If you opt-into the at-home Rapid Antigen Testing Program

- Your child must quarantine at home for seven days.
- On day six of quarantine, your child must get a standard (PCR) test at your local [COVID-19 testing site](#). If the PCR test is negative, you must provide the results to school.
- Your child can return to school on day eight if you participate in the daily at home rapid antigen testing program.
- Your child must complete a rapid antigen test at home on school days between days 8 and 14 each morning, and report this to school prior to attending.

If you do not opt-into the Rapid Antigen Testing program

- Your child must quarantine at home for 14 days.
- On day 13 of quarantine, your child must get a standard (PCR) test at your local [COVID-19 testing site](#). If the PCR test is negative, you must provide the results to school.
- Your child can then return to school.

What does an invalid test result mean?

The test has not worked. You may have collected your child's nasal swab incorrectly, or the test may have some manufacturing defects.

You need to repeat the test. If your child still gets an invalid result on the second rapid antigen test, your child must get a standard (PCR) test.

If you get a 'positive' result on the repeat test, you need to follow the positive result instructions. For a 'negative' result, follow the negative result instructions.

What should I do if I need help performing the test?

Contact the department's COVID-19 hotline (1800 338 663) for general advice and support about at-home rapid antigen testing. If you're having difficulty performing the test on your child, it might help to have hotline staff talk you through the steps or request another person to help you.

My child is fully vaccinated, do they have to do a rapid antigen test?

No, if your child has been vaccinated they do not need to participate in the rapid antigen testing pilot.

If they are identified as a primary close contact, they must do the following:

- quarantine at home for seven days
- on day six of quarantine, your child must get a standard (PCR) test at your local [COVID-19 testing site](#). If the PCR test is negative, you must provide the results to school
- your child can return to school on day eight.

In case students haven't done a rapid antigen test at home, will they be tested at school? Who will administer this test, and how are parents consenting to this?

If a child arrives at school without completing a rapid antigen test or reporting the result to the school, parents will be contacted to immediately collect their child and perform a rapid antigen test at school, or alternatively continue with a 14-day quarantine at home and PCR test on day 13.

Costs and access

Where do I get a rapid antigen test from?

Schools will provide tests to parents and carers at no charge, on or about day seven. You do not need to buy tests.

Rapid antigen testing in schools

The Department of Education and Training is working with the Department of Health to use at-home rapid antigen testing of unvaccinated primary close contacts (PCCs) to safely enable an earlier return to school.

Key messages:

- On Monday 1 November, the Therapeutic Goods Administration approved several rapid antigen tests for home use.
- Rapid antigen tests can check for the presence of COVID-19, are self-administered and can be done at home.
- Rapid antigen testing does not replace standard (PCR) testing for the purpose of diagnosis of COVID-19 in children, staff and students, regardless of vaccination status.
- From Monday 15 November, the Department of Education and Training will begin a statewide roll-out of a rapid antigen testing program for any students who are Primary Close Contacts (PCCs). Household PCCs (who live in the same household as a person with COVID-19) cannot participate.
- The program will use at-home rapid antigen testing to enable an earlier return to school. It will enable unvaccinated, or partially vaccinated, students to return to school after a seven-day quarantine, instead of a 14-day quarantine.
- Children cannot return to school unless they return a negative standard (PCR) test.
- The statewide roll-out applies to all schools, including the non-government school sector, who choose to participate.
- The at-home rapid antigen testing program is an opt-in program for unvaccinated, or partially vaccinated, students who are PCCs. Household PCCs cannot participate.
- If you want to opt into the at-home rapid antigen testing program:
 - Your child must quarantine at home for seven days from the date the close contact occurred (day 0).
 - On day 6 of quarantine, your child must get a standard (PCR) test at a COVID-19 testing site. If the PCR test is negative, provide the results to your child's school.
 - Your child can then return to school from day 8 with a 'test to stay'.
 - Your child must complete a rapid antigen test at home on school days between days 8 and 14 each morning.
 - You must send the test result to your school using the e-form provided each day. This must be done prior to your child arrives at school and no later than 8:30am.
 - The web-based form is available [here](#)
- If you do not want your child to have a rapid antigen test:
 - Your child must quarantine at home for 14 days.
 - On day 13 of quarantine, the child must get a standard (PCR) test.
 - If the test is negative, results are provided to the child's school
 - Then, your child can return to school.
- Vaccinated students do not need to participate in the rapid antigen testing program but must quarantine at home for 7 days.

- Schools will provide parents with rapid antigen test kits. There will be no cost to parents and carers.
- While there are different types of rapid antigen tests, the Roche test is being used for the school roll-out.
- Children aged 12 to 17 years old who want to test themselves should be supervised to ensure it is done correctly. Children under 12 years will need a parent or guardian to perform the test on them.
- Where an invalid result has been obtained, the nasal swab may have been collected incorrectly or the test may be faulty. Another rapid antigen test on the child is required.
- This rapid antigen testing program is one of many strategies put in place to support schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. The department's [website](#) includes further advice and support for managing and responding to COVID-19 in schools.
- For help and support with the a-home rapid antigen testing, the department's COVID-19 hotline on [1800 338 663](tel:1800338663) has more information.