

21st Dec. 2021

Deputy Jim O'Callaghan,
Dáil Éireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Issued via email to: jim.ocallaghan@oireachtas.ie

PQ Number: 59837/21

Question: To ask the Minister for Health if antigen testing will be made available for preschool settings in the same way that it is being made available for primary and secondary schools; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy O'Callaghan,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

On Monday 29th November the Department of Education, in conjunction with the HSE, commenced providing antigen tests for asymptomatic children and staff in Primary schools, who are identified as members of a pod with a confirmed Covid-19 case. To date 90,351 antigen test kits have been distributed to Primary School pods with 3,303 positive results self –recorded on the online portal.

The parameters for the antigen testing programme have been agreed by the HSE. The wider roll-out of antigen testing in Early Learning and Care (ELC) services has been made available since December 15th to asymptomatic children (aged 4 and over) and staff in an ELC pod where there is a confirmed case of COVID-19.

To date 2,214 antigen test kits have been distributed to Childcare pods with 216 positive results self –recorded on the online portal. To note antigen testing for children under the age of 4 has not been recommended.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Damien McCallion
National Director
National Lead Test & Trace and Vaccination Programme