

Introduction

The “lolly test” is a child-friendly and simple method for testing for coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) using a highly sensitive PCR test. The ease of collecting samples and the ability to test all children in a class (or part of a class) or child care / support group in parallel enables the widespread and time-saving use of this test method in schools. Systematic testing of schoolchildren for the virus using highly sensitive test methods can help to detect the risk of infection in schools at an early stage and stop chains of infection.

For more information about the testing procedure, please refer to the website <https://www.schulministerium.nrw>.



Lollipop testing procedure

Sample collection as part of the pool test

1. Samples are collected in the morning, at the beginning of class.
2. Pool swabs from children who belong to one in-person learning group are collected in one joint collection tube.
 - 2a) If in-person teaching is suspended because the average daily cases per 100,000 in the last 7 days exceed 165, samples will be collected following the same pattern in the designated child care / support groups instead of in the classes (or partial classes).
3. The method of labelling the joint collection tubes (QA code, labelling by name, ...) shall be agreed with the laboratory serving the school.

Pickup and testing

1. A daily pickup service will take the pool samples to the relevant laboratory.
2. One PCR test per pool is performed in the laboratory.

Normal case: PCR negative	Exception: PCR positive
<p>No infection: A notification is sent to the school. In-person teaching for the tested learning group or child care / support group can continue as usual.</p>	<p>At least one infected person: The laboratory informs the Covid contact person if possible on the same day, but by no later than 6 a.m. the following day.</p> <p>The school informs the parents of the learning group that received the positive PCR pool test result.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Quarantine rules:</p> <p>All children in the pool that tested positive must stay at home for the time being.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>

Retesting:

1. Parents of children in the pool that tested positive collect a new sample from their children at home the next morning, and label the individual tube with their child's details.
2. The parents take the individual samples to the school that morning.

Exception: In special schools with a focus on mental development as well as physical and motor development, but also on vision as well as hearing and communication, the second sample is taken directly in the special schools.



Pickup and testing:

1. A pickup service takes the samples from the school to the laboratory.
2. In the laboratory, each individual sample is PCR tested.

Individual PCR test negative
→ No SARS-CoV-2 infection

Children who receive a negative test result from the individual retesting can go back to school.

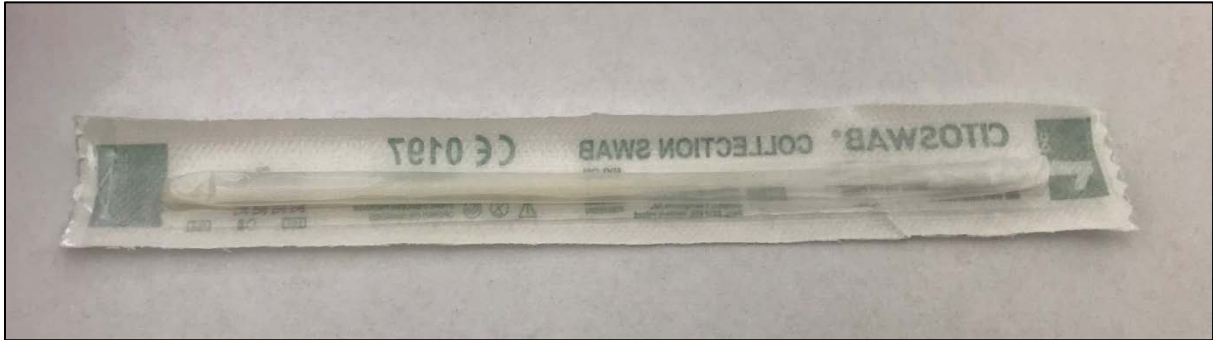
Individual PCR test positive
→ SARS-CoV-2 infection

The child is not allowed to attend in-person classes or child care / support offerings in school. The laboratory informs the relevant authority (local health authority), which decides on the further course of action.

Pool swab

Samples are taken by having each child suck on a pool swab. There are two different types of swabs: pool swabs and individual swabs.

Pool swab



This pool swab is used for daily sample collection in school, and can be recognised by the predetermined breaking point.

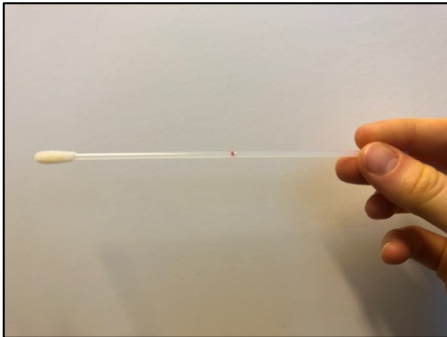
Individual swab



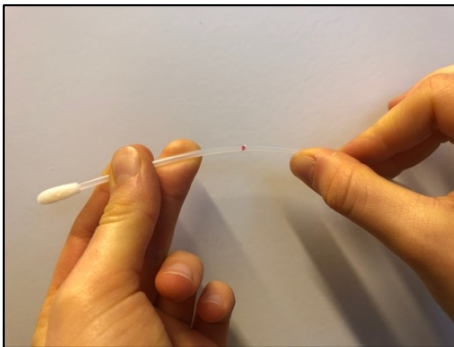
Children will receive this individual swab on the first day of testing after this test method is introduced. They should give it to their parents, who should keep it at home. This individual swab is packed in its own tube. In the event that a pool tests positive, the parents can take a sample from their child at home the next morning (lolly test) and take it to the school. It is important that parents label the individual swab with the child's name or follow the school's instructions when the test method is introduced. There may be differences between schools due to the partner laboratories having different procedures.

Preparing for the pool test

1. Sample collection using the pool swab must always take place under the supervision of school staff. It is done at the beginning of class.
2. It is important that the swabs (pool swabs) from children in one group are placed together **in one** joint collection tube (pool sample).
3. School staff will document participation so that the school can track which children have been tested. The school will keep a daily list for this purpose of children who have participated in the pool tests. This list will remain with the school.



Take the pool swab out of its wrapper.



Snap it in two at the predetermined breaking point. Discard the rear part of the swap.



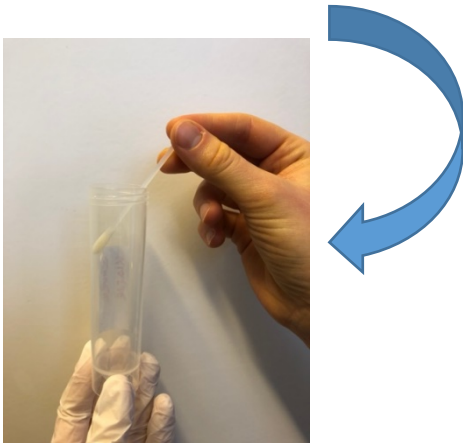
The broken-off pool swab now has a length of 8-10 cm ("lollipop length").




Pool test sample collection

Children suck on the cotton swab end of the pool swab for 30 seconds **under supervision**. Children should be seated during this time and there should be a calm atmosphere.



After 30 seconds, the children place their **pool swab** into the collection tube **with the cotton swab end pointing downwards**.



-  The pool swabs must not be dropped on the floor or touched on the cotton swab end.
-  The pool swabs must be placed into the collection tube swab end first (cotton swab pointing downwards).
-  Pool swabs that have not been used (no sample has been taken) should not be placed in the collection tube.

Once the swabs for all children **in a group** have been placed in the collection tube, the tube is closed tightly and labelled in the manner agreed with the relevant laboratory.

Labelling and packaging of the pool samples

1. The name of the school is pre-printed on the collection slip.
2. School staff must write the name of the teaching group or, in the case of child care only, the child care group, on the laboratory slip.
3. School staff must write on the laboratory slip the number of children who have placed a pool swab in the tube.
4. The method of labelling the joint collection tubes (QR code, labelling by name, ...) shall be agreed with the respective laboratory.
5. The joint collection tubes for the group and the laboratory slip are placed into the same plastic bag.
6. The samples are collected by a pickup service. The samples should be ready for collection at the designated place at the agreed time.

Notification of pool test results

The joint collection tubes are tested in a pool PCR test. If the test result is negative, it means that no child who placed their swab into the collection tube is infected with SARS-CoV-2. A standard notification is sent by the relevant laboratory to the school.

On the other hand, if (in the exceptional case) the test result is positive, it means that at least one person in the group is infected with SARS-CoV-2. In this case, the laboratory reports the result to the school and the competent authority (e.g. local health authority).

The school must then inform the parents of the children in the positive pool following the agreed reporting chain. The children must stay at home the next day.


Sample collection for individual test at home

In the morning, a parent unscrews the individual swab tube and gives the individual swab to the child. The child sucks on the cotton swab end of the individual swab for 30 seconds **under supervision**.

After 30 seconds, the parent takes the **individual swab** from the child, places it back into the sample tube, and screws the cap back on tightly.



The individual swabs must not be dropped on the floor or touched on the cotton swab end.

 The individual swab must be placed into the tube swab end first.

Notification of the results of the individual PCR test

The laboratory informs the Covid contact person in the school and, for the person found to have tested positive, the competent authority (local health authority).