



Access to Public Information Request

Date of receipt: 23 August 2021

Date of response: 15 September 2021

Access to Public Information request regarding COVID-19 testing for children

Request:

Testing of Children

As per your statement:

<https://gov.gg/educationtesting>

We are being asked to test children, most of whom will be asymptomatic.

If I understand correctly asymptomatic transmission of a virus was not really considered an issue in the past, and there has been very little if any Scientific evidence for it. Presumably Asymptomatic transmission is being accepted since the start of the spread of Sars-Cov2, so I am assuming this is something new applying to Sars-Cov2.

Bearing the above in mind there must be compelling scientific evidence worldwide where asymptomatic transmission of Sar-Cov2 has been proven;

1. Can you please provide the scientifically proven evidence of Sars-Cov2 asymptomatic transmission, and also provide how many such proven cases there have been worldwide? (Where each case has been scientifically proven and verified.)
2. It is not made clear if the testing is a COMPULSORY requirement to attend an education establishment, please confirm is this is compulsory, and under which laws this falls.

Response provided by Public Health Services:

1. Testing children on their return to education settings is a process that was put in place before children and young people returned to education after each lock-down.

It makes sense to use the start of the academic new year to carry out widespread surveillance testing of children following a 6-week summer break where we are aware that we have cases of COVID-19 appearing in our community.

Asymptomatic individuals can transmit the virus and we have never considered it not to be a concern, that is why we isolate all cases, not just symptomatic cases.

2. Your first question asks for the scientifically proven evidence of Sars-Cov2 asymptomatic transmission, and also provide how many such proven cases there have been worldwide? (Where each case has been scientifically proven and verified).

It is impossible for Public Health Services in Guernsey to provide you with that information as we do not collate statistics for worldwide asymptomatic transmission.

There are many articles available on symptomatic and asymptomatic transmission. Here is one such example: [Transmission of SARS-CoV-2: implications for infection prevention precautions \(who.int\)](#)

3. The majority of children and young people under the age of 16 are unvaccinated and have enjoyed a summer of mixing with family and friends. Whilst the number of cases of COVID-19 detected within the Bailiwick remained lower than other jurisdictions, we were seeing cases of community seeding over the summer. In order to minimise the potential impact of COVID-19 cases within educational settings, and to reduce the risk of the virus spreading more widely within our community, all children and young people were offered COVID-19 testing before they return to an education setting.

This testing is **voluntary** but is very valuable in terms of protecting the operation of the school. This surveillance testing detected a number of cases of COVID-19 and reduced the need to close education settings. The aim of return to education testing is to keep children in education and avoid the need to isolate them. If we don't test children and staff and cases will spread through a school, affecting both teachers and students. No one wants this further disruption to our children's education.