

Managing Coronavirus (Covid-19)

Covid-19 - Response to any infection

All school staff and pupils can access The NHS Test and Trace testing system, used to test symptomatic people (using a 'polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test').

If a pupil who has attended school, or a staff member, receives a positive PCR test having developed symptoms, schools should follow the guidance below.

Schools must ensure they understand the NHS Test and Trace process.

Schools must also ensure that staff members and parents/carers understand that they will need to be ready and willing to:

- book a PCR test if they or their child are displaying symptoms.
 - The main symptoms are a high temperature, a new continuous cough and/or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.
 - Staff and pupils must not come into the school if they have symptoms and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them in school.
 - All children can be tested if they have symptoms, including children under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parents or carers if using a home testing kit
- provide details of anyone they or their child have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), or if anyone in their household develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), or if they are required to do so having recently travelled from certain other countries.
 - Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a PCR test. PCR tests can be booked online through the NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet.
 - Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have priority access to PCR testing. The government will ensure that it is as easy as possible to get a PCR test through a wide range of routes that are locally accessible, fast and convenient. We will release more details on new PCR testing avenues as and when they become available and will work with schools so they understand the quickest and easiest way to get a PCR test.
 - The PCR test kits sent to schools are provided to be used in the exceptional circumstance that an individual becomes symptomatic and schools believe they may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere. It is for schools to determine how to prioritise the distribution of their test kits in order to minimise the impact of the virus on the education of their pupils.
 - These kits can be given directly to staff or parents and carers collecting a child who has developed symptoms at school. In particular, these test kits will also help ensure that symptomatic staff can also get a test and if they test negative, can return to work as soon as they no longer have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Schools should ask parents of children attending school and staff to inform them immediately of the results of any tests taken outside school and follow this guidance.

- If someone with symptoms tests negative for coronavirus (COVID-19), then they should stay at home until they are recovered as usual from their illness but can safely return thereafter. The only exception to return following a negative test result is where an individual is separately identified as a close contact of a confirmed case, when they will need to self-isolate for 10 days from the date of that contact.
- If someone with symptoms tests positive, they should follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should continue to self-isolate until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should all self-isolate for the full 10 days from the day after the individual tested positive.

Managing confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community

Schools must take swift action when they become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) having developed symptoms and taken a PCR test outside of school.

- Schools should contact the dedicated advice service introduced by Public Health England (PHE) and delivered by the NHS Business Services Authority, giving advice on the action to take in response to a positive case. Schools will be put through to a team of advisers who will inform them of what action is needed based on the latest public health advice
- The advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated) will work with schools to guide them through the actions they need to take. Based on their advice, schools must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 10 days from the day after contact with the individual tested positive. Close contact means:
 - direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
 - proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
 - travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

The advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated) will provide advice on who must be sent home. To support them in doing so, school will keep a record of pupils and staff in each group, and any close contact that takes places between children and staff in different groups.

A template letter will be provided to schools, on the advice of the health protection team, to send to parents and staff if needed.

- Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms.
- If someone in a class or group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within the 10-days from the day after contact with the individual tested positive should follow guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. They should get a test, and:

- if someone who is self-isolating because they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) starts to feel unwell and gets a test for coronavirus themselves, and the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 10-day isolation period. This is because they could still develop coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days.
- if the test result is positive, they should inform their setting immediately, and should isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 10-day isolation period).
 - Their household should self-isolate for at least 10 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection
 - In the majority of cases, schools and parents will be in agreement that a child with symptoms should not attend school, given the potential risk to others. In the event that a parent or guardian insists on a child attending school, schools can take the decision to refuse the child if in their reasonable judgement it is necessary to protect their pupils and staff from possible infection with coronavirus (COVID-19). Any such decision would need to be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and the current public health advice.

Further guidance is available on testing and tracing for coronavirus (COVID-19).

Containing any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

If schools have two or more confirmed cases within 10 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, they may have an outbreak and must continue to work with their local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other pupils self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole site or year group. If schools are implementing controls from this list, addressing the risks they have identified and therefore reducing transmission risks, whole school closure based on cases within the school will not generally be necessary, and should not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.

In consultation with the local Director of Public Health, where an outbreak in a school is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will first focus on the person's class, followed by their year group, then the whole school if necessary, in line with routine public health outbreak control practice.