

As a parent, what do you need to know about how schools are expected to manage the threat of COVID?

What are the three key changes in the guidance?

1. Mixing and 'bubbles'

Keeping students or students in year group or classroom bubbles to reduce mixing is no longer a requirement.

2. Tracing close contacts

Close contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace. Education settings are no longer expected to undertake contact tracing.

3. Face coverings

Face coverings are no longer advised for students, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas.

What will stay the same?

Coronavirus has not gone away, so there will still be a need for schools and students to follow basic measures to avoid the spread of the virus:

1. Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within schools.
2. Ensuring good hygiene, including frequent and thorough hand cleaning and the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
3. Maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes.
4. Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated.
5. Following public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

What do these changes mean for your child in school?

Students will be able to mix within their year group at play- time and as a school before and after school. Student will be moving freely around the school and to all their lessons. Where a child or member of staff still wishes to wear a mask they are very welcome to, however they are now not mandatory. You will see some members of staff choosing to do this, particularly if they are working closely with students.

You will need to mindful that the school will still use open windows and doors as its main means of ventilation and during winter, this can make it colder than normal. So please make sure they have appropriate clothing to compensate. We will also take every opportunity to teach and play outdoors so again raincoats and warm clothing will be essential. Sinks and hand sanitisers will remain available to students and they will be reminded to use these frequently.

We will continue to notify you if there are cases, but self-isolation will not need to occur for a class if only one students has COVID. Students in Year 7 and Year 8 will continue to test.

What if there are a number of cases in one school or college?

If cases begin to occur, Public Health may advise we reintroduce the following measures:

- Increased testing
- Temporarily reintroducing face coverings and;
- Restricting attendance as a short-term measure and only as a last resort.

It is important that you have a back-up plan for each term as to where your child would work if they were required to work from home. This would be our last resort but is still an available option.

More information on the guidance we have issued to education settings is available on the Government website: [Contingency framework: education and childcare settings](#).

When should students self-isolate?

Students should only **self-isolate if they have symptoms** or if they get a **positive PCR** or

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test.

If they develop symptoms or get a positive LFD test, they should book a PCR test. **A positive PCR test cannot be overridden.** If a student is asked to get a PCR test as a result of contact with a positive case, they may continue to attend education until they get the result of their PCR back.

What about people who have been in contact with positive cases including staff?

Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, if any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons.

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. They do not need to isolate while awaiting the PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Staff who do not need to isolate and children and young people aged under 18 years 6 months who usually attend school, and have been identified as a close contact, should continue to attend school as normal.

If none of the above applies, people should self-isolate [as per the instructions from NHS Test and Trace.](#)