

Dear Parents and Carers,

## Re: Updated Covid 19 Information

As you are aware, the Prime Minister announced some changes to guidance as part of the government's "Living With Covid" plan. I am sure we are all keen to welcome a return to more normal times, after two years of upheaval. However, we need to be mindful that reducing measures could lead to an increase in disruption if it means that more positive cases come into School. We also must think about vulnerable staff and pupils, or those with a household member who is vulnerable. For these reasons we will still be taking some precautions in school and as we move into this new phase of the pandemic we will continue to closely monitor case numbers.

Below is a summary of what has changed and details of our school arrangements.

### Twice weekly asymptomatic testing

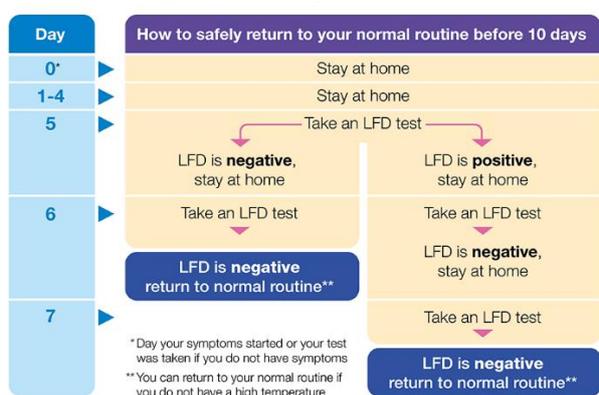
The recommendation to perform twice weekly covid tests at home has been dropped as of Monday 21 February 2022. However, if you chose to continue regular testing it will help control the spread of the virus in school. We will not generally be distributing kits to students on a regular basis, however if we appear to be having an outbreak we will resume. Students are also able to access test kits from their local pharmacy or [online](#).

### What to do when your child is displaying symptoms of COVID 19

If your child does develop symptoms then you should confirm a positive case of covid 19 with a PCR test. From Thursday 24 February the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test will be removed.

However, the government **strongly recommends** that people with a positive test result continue to **isolate for at least 5 days and end isolation with two negative test results on consecutive days**. We fully expect all students and staff to follow this guidance and remote learning will continue to be provided for all students isolating due to a positive covid test.

### How to safely return to your normal routine before 10 days





So, if your child has covid- 19 symptoms you should keep them at home and inform school about why they are absent. If your child's PCR is positive then please update school with this information.

### **Isolation for close contacts**

Also, from 24th February, there will be no requirement for anyone to isolate should they be a close contact with a positive case, whether fully vaccinated or not, and routine NHS contact tracing will end. All this guidance is in place until 1 April 2022 after which the government plan is also to end most free covid-19 testing. Further guidance on how positive cases will be identified after this date and what isolation, if any, will be recommended will be published nearer the time.

### **Face coverings**

We no longer ask that students, adults and visitors wear face coverings in any part of the school. However, anyone wishing to wear a face covering may continue to do so. All of this guidance is subject to change with local public health guidance should there be an outbreak or change to the current infection rate.

### **Continued measures**

Our ongoing measures include;

- Regular updating of our risk assessment
- Continuing to track numbers of cases in case we get evidence of an outbreak and therefore need to reintroduce some further measures
- More regular cleaning
- Good ventilation in classrooms and work spaces

The following links will also take you to guidance that you may find helpful;

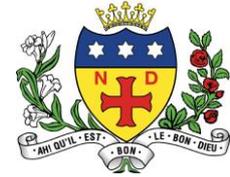
[Living With COVID plan](#)

[general asymptomatic testing advice](#)

[COVID-19: people with COVID-19 and their contacts](#)

[Safe at home infographic \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Kind regards,  
Mrs Cleary  
Headteacher



Andrew Jones

Updates to DfE guidance following the Prime Minister's announcement

On Monday 21 February, the Prime Minister set out the next phase of the government's COVID-19 response '[Living with COVID-19](#)'. COVID-19 continues to be a virus that we learn to live with and the imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people's education remains.

For the education and childcare sectors, the main changes announced include:

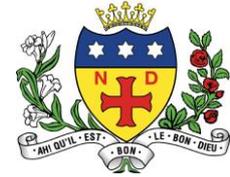
- changes to self-isolation and daily testing of close contacts
- changes to testing in education and childcare settings and children's social care services

DfE has updated the following guidance to reflect these changes:

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- [actions for early years and childcare providers](#)
- [schools COVID-19 operational guidance](#)
- [further education COVID-19 operational guidance](#)
- [higher education COVID-19 operational guidance](#)
- [SEND and specialist settings additional COVID-19 operational guidance](#)
- [COVID-19: actions for out-of-school settings](#)
- [out-of-school settings: COVID-19 guidance for parents and carers](#)
- [contingency framework for education and childcare settings](#)
- [[http://What%20parents%20and%20carers%20need%20to%20know%20about%20early%20years%20providers,%20schools%20and%20colleges%20-%20GOV.UK%20\(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges)]What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

For advice on contact tracing, self-isolation and the actions people with symptoms or confirmed COVID-19 should take, see the new [UK Health Security Agency \(UKHSA\) guidance. COVID-19: people with COVID-19 and their contacts - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)



**The LA Public Health Team recognise that there is a significant amount of updated guidance. Therefore we would recommend that the highlighted guidance documents are particularly helpful and would encourage you to read these documents.** The updated contingency framework provides clarification on increased thresholds for seeking guidance regarding outbreak management and it is important that you familiarise yourselves with this.

Whilst this is the last formal bulletin should any additional new guidance be published we will forward this to on to you. There will be a final **School Headteacher briefing** on COVID led by Greg Fell Director of Public Health. This is taking place via ZOOM on 12 noon – 1.00 p.m. on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Joining details have been circulated directly by Learn Sheffield. There will be an opportunity at this briefing to discuss the new published guidance and raise any questions.

The Prime Minister has now set out the next phase of the government's COVID-19 response '[Living with COVID-19](#)'. COVID-19 continues to be a virus that we learn to live with and the imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people's education remains.

Further information on what this means for education and childcare settings and children's social care services is below.

#### New testing in education settings document sharing platform

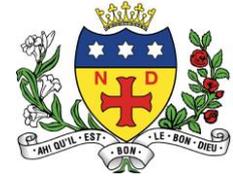
Following the recent announcement of the '[Living with COVID-19](#)' plan, which included changes in asymptomatic testing in early years, schools and colleges, a new [testing in education settings document sharing platform](#) is now live and has been updated with all our latest guidance and supporting documents, including a 'Living with COVID-19' webinar.

The existing primary and secondary schools document sharing platforms are no longer in use, please save the new platform as a bookmark for ease for future reference.

### **3.Changes to self-isolation and daily testing of close contacts**

From Thursday 24 February, the Government will remove the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test. Adults and children who test positive will continue to be advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least 5 full days, and then continue to follow the guidance until they have received 2 negative test results on consecutive days. In addition, the Government will:

- No longer ask fully vaccinated close contacts and those aged under 18 to test daily for 7 days, and remove the legal requirement for close contacts who are not fully vaccinated to self-isolate.
- End self-isolation support payments, national funding for practical support and the medicine delivery service will no longer be available.



- End routine contact tracing. Contacts will no longer be required to self-isolate or advised to take daily tests. Staff, children and young people should attend their education settings as usual. This includes staff who have been in close contact within their household, unless they are able to work from home.
- End the legal obligation for individuals to tell their employers when they are required to self-isolate.

More detail can be found in the [Living with COVID-19](#) plan

## The key

### What's the latest?

**25 February:** the government has published [guidance for people with COVID-19 and their contacts](#). This sets out advice for people who:

- Live with someone who has tested positive, or
- Stayed overnight in the household of someone who tested positive

This includes limiting close contact with people outside their home, and working from home if they can, for 10 days – although this is not a legal requirement.

The government's updated schools [operational guidance](#) has also confirmed that you can refuse to allow a pupil who is confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 to attend your school, in certain circumstances. See more on this below.

**23 February:** we've updated this article to reflect new [government guidance](#) on asymptomatic testing in schools, and guidance on [living with COVID-19](#).

From 21 February, staff in primary and secondary schools, and pupils in secondary schools, are no longer expected to take regular, twice-weekly lateral flow tests.

From 24 February, there is no legal requirement to self-isolate after a positive test. You are also not required to isolate, or advised to test daily for 7 days, if you're a close contact of a positive case.

## Twice-weekly testing is no longer required in mainstream schools

This applies to:

- Staff in primary schools
- Staff in secondary schools
- Pupils in secondary schools

This is explained in the [schools COVID-19 operational guidance](#) (pages 5 and 10).



Special schools and alternative provision settings should continue twice-weekly testing

This also applies to SEND units in mainstream schools.

These settings are advised to continue regular asymptomatic testing for staff and pupils of secondary age and above. The government has published specific [operational guidance](#) for specialist settings that includes more detail, and additional [guidance](#) with advice on what to do if you have pupils who may find testing difficult or cannot self-swab.

These settings are also advised to retain testing facilities on site where necessary (see page 12 of the operational guidance). As before, testing remains voluntary.

How should we get consent?

You need to offer the person giving consent a privacy notice to read, so they understand what's happening with their data. The DfE has produced a template privacy notice you can use [here](#).

You may need to reintroduce or increase testing in the event of an outbreak

This would be on the advice of your local public health team or director of public health, as explained in the [guidance for mainstream schools](#) (page 10) and [specialist settings](#) (page 12).

When to seek public health advice

If your positive cases reach certain thresholds

The DfE's [contingency framework for education and childcare settings](#) explains that schools should consider taking extra steps to manage the transmission of COVID-19 and seek public health advice if the number of positive cases reaches a certain threshold.

The thresholds are:

- **5** positive cases (staff and/or pupils who have likely been in close contact) within a **10-day** period; *or*
- **10%** of staff and/or pupils who have likely been in close contact test positive within a **10-day** period

For special schools, residential schools, and schools with 20 or fewer pupils and staff:

- **2** positive cases (children, pupils and/or staff who have likely been in close contact) within a **10-day** period

Meeting these thresholds indicates that your school may be a site of transmission, and extra precautions may be needed (see pages 11 and 12 of the contingency guidance linked above).



If a pupil or staff member is admitted to hospital with COVID-19

All schools should seek public health advice if a pupil or staff member is admitted to hospital with COVID-19.

Responding to test results or symptoms

Download our flowcharts outlining [how to respond to a suspected case](#) among staff or pupils.

It's no longer a legal requirement to self-isolate, even if you test positive for coronavirus. However, the government has issued [updated advice](#), including recommended isolation periods. There are no longer separate rules on self-isolation or testing for people who are not fully vaccinated.

More guidance will be published on 1 April, and we'll update this article as soon as possible.

A staff member or pupil **should** do the following, if they:

**Have symptoms:**

- Stay at home and avoid contact with other people, according to [government guidance](#)
- Order a PCR test, and follow government guidance if they test positive (see below)

**Get a positive lateral flow or PCR test result:**

- Self-isolate for 5 days, according to [government guidance](#)
- After 5 days, they can choose to take a lateral flow test on 2 consecutive days
- If both tests are negative and they do not have a temperature, they can return to school

Are a close contact of a positive case, or live with a positive case:

- Continue attending school as normal
- If they live with, or stayed overnight with, someone who tested positive, they are advised to follow [government advice](#) for 10 days
- If they develop symptoms, stay at home and take a PCR test in line with [government guidance](#)

If pupils come to school after testing positive, or with suspected COVID-19

You can refuse a pupil with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 if, in your reasonable judgement, you need to do this to protect staff and pupils (see page 10 of the [operational guidance](#)).

Update your documents



## Plan for the reintroduction of restrictions

The [COVID-19 contingency framework](#) advises schools to plan for the local reintroduction of measures for managing coronavirus outbreaks. The guidance explains that your school should have an outbreak management plan, which should include:

- Roles and responsibilities
- How and when you would seek public health advice (for example, if 1 of the thresholds for positive cases were met)
- What control measures could be introduced, including how you would:
  - Put them in place
  - Make sure pupils' education is not disrupted
  - Communicate the changes to pupils, parents and staff

Your contingency plans should include the possibility of reintroducing or increasing testing for staff (and, where offered, pupils), and reintroducing the regular use of an asymptomatic testing site (ATS).

[Download a template for your plan.](#)

### **Update your risk assessment**

You may want to update your coronavirus risk assessment to reflect your school's procedure for testing. Use our [template risk assessment](#) to help you.

However, from 1 April, the government will remove the health and safety requirement for every employer to explicitly consider COVID-19 in their risk assessments