

FAQs for Schools for academic year 2021/22

School Operation & Risk Assessment

Does the school need to update their risk assessments ready for the start of term?

Yes - The use of face masks and bubbles are not compulsory for the new term. Other protective measures recommended by the DfE and PHE are broadly the same previously and schools should continue to use their existing system of controls to reduce the risk of transmission. It may be useful to remind the school community that the return to school **does not mean a relaxation in restrictions** and that both staff and students should continue to adhere to procedures such as hand washing and social distancing. Staff are still able to wear face masks in busy areas and at busy times.

We have already completed our COVID-19 risk assessments. This will be reviewed and updated, as necessary, throughout the term. It is available on the school website.

Can the schools invite parents/carers on-site next week?

Yes, schools can invite parents in to school now that we have left step 4 of the COVID roadmap as we are trying to return to some sort of normality within school but schools will need to have due consideration to how they manage the risk – i.e. communicate in advance of any events, no-one is to attend if they have COVID symptoms, or indeed isolating, masks, socially distanced if possible. The number of people attending, space and ventilation will also be considered.

Common sense should prevail if the community transmission number is high and, in this case, the advice would be for schools to consider if the event can be held virtually. Should schools decide to hold an event then they will need to follow their COVID risk assessment procedures to ensure all visitors are checked in and recorded on COVID visitor log (for test and trace purposes), most schools encourage masks to be worn at any events taking place indoors – so control measures do need to be considered.

Schools going back in September are a risk to the COVID transmission due the children mixing but also due to parents mixing with each other more in school and socially.

Will staff and students need to wear face masks in school in September?

They do not need to wear a face covering within the school, but it is recommended that these are worn when in busy places or mixing with other people they would not usually mix with. They are still needed when travelling on public or dedicated transport. If there is an outbreak, then this may need more consideration e.g parents/pupils.

Will bubbles and social distancing have to be maintained in September?

We are no longer expected to keep pupils in strict bubbles.

When we returned to school, in March 2021, we updated the COVID appendix to our behaviour and safeguarding policies. Is a further update required for September or is something different required/recommended?

We continue to have regard to any statutory safeguarding guidance that applies to us, including:

- [Keeping children safe in education](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children](#)
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework

If attendance restrictions are needed due to a localised Covid-19 outbreak the expectation would be that all local safeguarding partners be vigilant and responsive to all safeguarding threats with the aim of keeping vulnerable children and young people safe.

Managing Covid Cases

If a pupil or member of staff tests positive for Covid-19 will close contacts need to isolate?

From 16 August, fully vaccinated adults*, those who have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial, those who are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons or those under 18 years 6 months identified as close contacts are not required to self-isolate unless they are symptomatic. Instead, close contacts will be advised to take a PCR test. If positive, NHS Test and Trace will inform the individual of next steps.

*Fully vaccinated means that you have been vaccinated with an MHRA approved COVID-19 vaccine in the UK (some vaccines administered outside of the UK are not MHRA approved) and at least 14 days have passed since you received the recommended doses of that vaccine (currently 2nd dose).

Will the school be expected to be involved in contact tracing in September?

We will not be asked to undertake routine contact tracing for children and young people. Contact tracing will be limited to close contacts identified by NHS Test and Trace. We may be contacted in exceptional cases to help identify close contacts. We may find it useful to note who each case 'mixed closely' with in the 48 hours prior to symptom onset/positive result to inform decisions regarding outbreak management. We will still need to close contact trace amongst the staff community. Close contacts should be reported to the Self Isolation Self Service Hub (020 3743 6715). NHS Test and Trace will then make contact to advise on isolation (if not fully vaccinated) and testing.

Why are Test and Trace taking over contact tracing from schools?

Schools have done a brilliant job in identifying contacts over the course of the pandemic, but this is resource intensive. NHS Test & Trace already manage the contact tracing process for the rest of society and has developed expertise in supporting people to identify close contacts.

How will a child or young person know what is meant by 'close contact'?

NHS Test & Trace will contact those who test positive – or their parent or legal guardian – to identify close contacts. They will ask a series of specific questions to help the individual understand what is meant by a close contact, making it easier for them to be identified. Contacts in a school would only be traced if the positive case specifically identified an individual as having close, prolonged contact.

Can schools expect to be asked about close contacts of a child or young person?

Schools may be contacted in exceptional cases by NHS Test and Trace to help with identifying close contacts where there is a local outbreak.

What do I do if a pupil/staff member has symptoms at school?

If the individual is symptomatic they need to isolate immediately. They should book a PCR test at a testing site within 48 hours. They should continue to isolate whilst they wait for their results. The school should carry out enhanced cleaning.

If someone in school has symptoms of Covid-19, how do they arrange a test?

Anyone can now register for a test [here](#) or call 119 if you do not have access to the internet. You can either request a home testing kit or arrange to visit a testing centre. You will be able to choose a testing centre from a selection of those closest to you. For children under 5 the parent or guardian will be required to perform the test.

Babies and children – call 111 if you're worried about a baby or child under 5. If the child seems very unwell, is getting worse or you think there is something seriously wrong, call 999. Do not delay getting help if you're worried. Trust your instincts.

What should the school do if a pupil/staff member with symptoms tests positive?

The individual should continue to isolate for 10 days. Self-isolation periods include the day your symptoms started or the day you took the test if you did not have symptoms and then the next full 10 days. The pupil/staff member must liaise with NHS test and trace for close contact purposes. They should inform the school of their positive result. We will then consider how we will communicate case numbers to parents and the school community. For a few cases it might not be necessary but you will be informed if there is an outbreak.

What should the school do if a parent reports their child as having symptoms and is staying home?

Report the child's absence in the normal way. We will keep in contact with the family for an update and ask for regular updates from the parents. If the child takes a PCR and received a negative result, they still should not return to school until they are at least 24 hours fever free.

What will we do if a pupil with symptoms or who should be self-isolating still comes to school?

We will refuse attendance of the pupil if, in our reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with COVID-19. School should liaise with the family concerned. This is very hard for school staff to do this, so please be supportive with the school's decision.

What should happen if someone in a pupil's/staff member's household tests positive for Covid-19?

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, and 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.

What would we do if there is an outbreak and how would we implement additional measures?

If this was the case, we would seek public health advice and follow their guidance. We would also consider who has 'mixed closely' and make the necessary adaptations.

"Mixed closely" implies more substantial contact than the 'close contact' definition and could include:

- a form group or subject class
- a friendship group mixing at breaktimes
- a sports team
- a group in an after-school activity
- a private tutor or coach offering one-to-one tuition to a child, or to multiple children at the same time
- staff and children taking part in the same class or activity session together
- children who have slept in the same room
- a friendship group who often socialise together

In the event of a local outbreak, what would be the advice for CEV staff and students?

Shielding is currently paused and can only be reintroduced by national government. In the event of a major outbreak or VoC that poses a significant risk to individuals on the shielded patient list (SPL), ministers can agree to reintroduce shielding. Shielding would be considered in addition to other measures to address the residual risk to people on the SPL, once the wider interventions are taken into account. Schools should make sure their contingency plans cover this possibility.

What about staff testing?

The vast majority of school staff will continue to take lateral flow tests x2 week.