

NYCC Public Health advice for educational settings

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General advice on key prevention measures

Infection prevention and control measures	<p><u>Hand hygiene</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settings should encourage regular hand hygiene, particularly before meals and after using the bathroom. Settings should display appropriate signage encouraging effective handwashing. • Supervision should be in place to support pupils with handwashing where needed. • Washing your hands with running water and soap is recommended. Use paper towels (or hand driers where there is limited particle spread). Avoid shared towels. • Hand sanitiser should be available in classrooms, eating areas and public places (e.g. reception) • Hand sanitiser points should be checked regularly and stock replenished where necessary. • Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth if hands have not been washed. • Respiratory hygiene is also important – emphasise ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach. Provision of sufficient waste bins that are emptied regularly. • Ensure visitors and contractors also comply with hand/respiratory hygiene and other measures (e.g. appropriate distancing) whilst on site.
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	<p><u>Cleaning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular cleaning schedules, with particular focus on cleaning frequently touched areas e.g. light switches, handrails, door handles, taps • Have cleaning wipes available in classrooms so that individuals are able to clean e.g. shared equipment between users. Similar for staff rooms/shared office spaces and cleaning of kettles/photocopiers/vending machines etc. • Reducing clutter and removing difficult to clean items • Surfaces that are visibly dirty should be cleaned prior to disinfection. <p><u>Ventilation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All spaces should be risk-assessed to ensure ventilation is adequate. Where schools have access to CO2 monitors these should be used to identify areas of poor ventilation. • Consider the appropriateness of spaces for the activities they are being used for e.g. perform higher risk activities (singing etc.) in large spaces or outside. • Air conditioning units should be set to ‘fresh air’ not ‘recirculating’. • Opening windows and doors (balanced with the need to maintain a comfortable temperature – if unable to have them open all the time then open them for e.g. 10 minutes every hour). • Where possible provide ventilation breaks during or between room usage. • Air cleaning and filtration units can be used (where available) to supplement improved ventilation. • More information on ventilation and air filtration is available from HSE: Work equipment and ventilation during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic - HSE
Face coverings	<p>Face coverings are not mandatory in educational settings but anyone (pupil or staff) who wishes to wear one can do so.</p> <p>**N.B. face coverings are currently recommended for all adults in communal areas of all education settings**</p> <p>***N.B. face coverings are currently recommended in classrooms and teaching spaces for students in year 7 and above – to be reviewed on 26th January***</p> <p>Face coverings should be worn on shared transport (school buses, train etc.).</p>
Testing	<p>Strongly encourage LFD testing twice a week for pupils (secondary school age and above), staff and household contacts. Anyone who tests positive on a LFD should isolate – from 11th January there is currently no need for a confirmatory PCR test following a positive LFD result.</p>

	<p>Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 should isolate immediately and take a PCR test.</p> <p>Isolation for anyone with a positive LFD or PCR test should last for a minimum of 5 full days (see national guidance here: Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)). From the 5th day after entering isolation individuals can take daily LFDs to identify whether they are likely to still be infectious. Once two LFD tests taken 24 hours apart both come back negative then the individual is able to leave isolation (provided they do not have a high temperature). This will be Day 6 at the earliest. If LFDs are still positive on Day 10 then no further LFDs should be taken and the individual can leave isolation, but individuals may wish to take extra precautions (e.g. wearing a face covering, avoiding unnecessary social activities) until Day 14.</p> <p>Anyone who has been identified as a close contact of a confirmed case by NHS Test & Trace who is not exempt from isolation will need to isolate for 10 full days and take a PCR test. Anyone aged 5yrs or over who is identified as a close contact and who is exempt from isolation (i.e. fully vaccinated, and/or under 18yrs 6 months) should complete 7 days of daily LFD testing. Each LFD should be taken prior to leaving the house for the first time each day (i.e. before attending school).</p> <p>Close contacts under the age of 5 are not required to isolate, and are not required to undertake daily LFD testing. However, should they develop symptoms at any point they should isolate and take a PCR test.</p> <p>LFD kits can be accessed at local pharmacies or ordered through 119/online at Order coronavirus (COVID-19) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).</p> <p><i>N.B. Anyone who has tested positive on a PCR in the last 90 days does not have to do a repeat PCR test unless they become symptomatic.</i></p>
Contact tracing	<p>Contact tracing of individuals will be carried out by NHS Test & Trace. Schools will not be required to provide details of pupils directly to the national Test & Trace team.</p> <p>The local authority (NYCC) or UKHSA may support with contact tracing if multiple cases are identified. This will generally involve requesting a line list of cases and contacts, and the team will provide further support on managing cases.</p>

	<p>Although there is no expectation for detailed contact tracing, good practice would be to inform families of those most likely to have been contacts (for example the class, the bus, football team, friendship group) that there has been a confirmed case in the school community and their child may have been exposed, so they should be vigilant for signs of illness and seek a PCR test if any symptoms develop (see suggested warn & inform letter).</p> <p>It is also good practice to identify staff close contacts of school cases and encourage them to undertake daily LFD tests for 7 days (any non-vaccinated close contacts should isolate and take a PCR test).</p> <p>Where a staff member has tested positive for COVID-19, education and childcare settings do not need to routinely contact the NHS Self Isolation Service Hub (020 3743 6715) to provide details of close contacts. However, to ensure eligible individuals identified as a close contact can access Test and Trace Support Payments you may consider providing staff details to the NHS Self Isolation Hub when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a staff member who was in close contact with the person testing positive has indicated they are not exempt from self-isolation, but the person testing positive was unable to provide that person’s details to NHS Test and Trace • it is particularly difficult for the person testing positive to identify or provide details of some members of staff they were in contact with, for example, temporary workers such as supply staff, peripatetic teachers, contractors or ancillary staff <p>Staff are encouraged to use the NHS COVID-19 App.</p>
Social distancing	<p>Whilst social distancing and measures such as school bubbles are no longer required, educational settings are advised to keep measures in place where it does not cause disruption to regular activities. This could include staggered breaks, minimising numbers for in-person meetings/training sessions or holding online where possible, maintaining messages about ‘respectful space’ etc.</p> <p>Continue to review pinch points and areas of congestion and particularly target these e.g. one way systems, improved ventilation, staggered use, tackling congestion at school gates etc.</p> <p>Keeping the number of occasions where large numbers of people mix to an absolute minimum is advised (e.g. school assemblies etc.). Use of virtual events (e.g. parents evenings) where practicable.</p> <p>Arrange furniture in areas such as reception, meeting rooms, staff rooms and offices to prevent face to face working and support respectful space where possible.</p>

Communications	Regular messages to school community to encourage prevention measures including testing.
Attendance	<p>All pupils should be encouraged to attend school (unless they have symptoms of COVID/have tested positive, or for other suitable non-COVID reason). Disruption to face-to-face education can have significant negative impacts, including on educational attainment, social behaviours and physical and mental health.</p> <p>Anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 should go home to isolate and get a PCR test as soon as possible. Schools should have a risk assessment in place covering how/where to manage potentially infectious individuals until they can be transported home (which should be by parent/guardian rather than by school transport).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If a pupil is awaiting collection, they should be left in a room on their own if possible and safe to do so. A window should be opened for fresh air ventilation if possible. Appropriate PPE should also be used if close contact is necessary. Any rooms they use should be cleaned after they have left.

Targeted support to at-risk cohorts (i.e. groups where all individuals are likely close contacts)

Infection prevention and control measures	<p><u>Hand hygiene</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures as above – continue to regularly promote and make sure adequate supplies available. <p><u>Cleaning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased frequency of cleaning in the affected areas and of communal areas e.g. toilets Follow guidance for cleaning areas that a symptomatic person has come into contact with, plus waste disposal advice - COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings outside the home - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) <p><u>Ventilation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider additional ventilation measures if possible, both inside and also holding sessions outside if appropriate
Face coverings	<p>Advise re-introduction of face coverings for the at-risk cohort(s) in classroom and communal areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and pupils in secondary school/college Staff in primary schools (although any pupils who do want to wear one should be free to do so) <p>This should be for 2 weeks initially, and then reviewed.</p> <p>[N.B. extended face covering use in the above situations should already be in place (January 2022) as a temporary Omicron measure]</p>
Testing	<p>If there is a clear cohort of individuals who are all likely to be close contacts (e.g. single class with high level of cases), 7 days of daily LFD tests can be recommended for this group as it is <i>likely</i> they have all been in close contact with a confirmed case(s). LFD tests should be taken daily before attending school (unless utilising on-site testing provision, in which case they should be done on arrival). This applies for close contacts aged 5 and over – whilst parents may choose to use LFD tests on children under 5 they are not required to in national guidance.</p> <p>If there is an increased number of positive cases but no clear cohort (e.g. increased number in a year group), the general warn & inform letter can be used encouraging all to engage in regular (twice a week) LFD testing and to get a PCR test if symptomatic (see below for suggested wording).</p>

	If any close contacts are unable to undertake daily LFD testing then additional mitigation measures should be considered e.g. recommending face coverings, minimising social contacts as much as possible.
Social distancing	<p>Cohort group away from rest of school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staggered break/mealtimes • Avoid shared transport wherever possible (and must wear face coverings if do need to use shared transport) • Avoid other shared facilities where possible (e.g. use separate bathroom if one available) • Avoid students in affected cohorts taking part in non-essential taster/transfer days, school trips, live performances etc. • Avoid taking part in higher risk activities e.g. singing, close contact sports/performance arts, residential trips • Consider arriving at school in PE kit on days where PE lessons occur to minimise close contact in changing rooms <p>Consider re-configuration of classrooms to minimise face to face contact, with set seating plans to minimise number of close contacts within the classroom setting itself.</p>
Communications	<p>“Likely close contact” letter to at-risk cohort(s)</p> <p>General “warn & inform” letter if increased cases (e.g. across whole year group) but no clear cohort</p>
Attendance	<p>The school may need to consider whether to move to remote learning for the class on operational grounds e.g. due to staffing shortages. Public health will support any operational closures, but they should also be discussed with the relevant Senior Educational Advisor from an operational perspective.</p> <p>If any staff/pupils are at high risk of severe disease with COVID-19 or in the third trimester of pregnancy then a more cautious approach may be needed for those individuals (in line with their individual risk assessments).</p>

Widespread transmission across a setting

Infection prevention and control measures	All measures as above.
Face coverings	<p>Recommend re-introduction of face coverings for the whole setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff, pupils and visitors in secondary school/college • Staff and visitors in primary schools (although any pupils who do want to wear one should be free to do so) <p>This should be for 2 weeks initially, and then reviewed.</p> <p>[N.B. extended face covering use in the above situations should already be in place (January 2022) as a temporary Omicron measure]</p> <p>[N.B. if an area is designated an ‘enhanced response area’ then there may be instruction issued to reintroduce face coverings across all settings in that area]</p>
Testing	<p>Strong emphasis on LFD testing twice a week. School may wish to consider re-introducing on-site ATS testing for a limited period if concerns about compliance with testing at home (this could just be for most at risk groups). ATS should be re-introduced in a way that does not negatively impact education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N.B. re-introduction of on-site ATS testing requires discussion with the public health team, who must inform the DfE Regional Schools Coordinator
Social distancing	<p>Avoid non-essential school events e.g. residential visits, open days, transition/taster days, parental attendance in settings, concerts, sports fixtures etc.</p> <p>Keep all classes/year groups separate as much as possible (re-introduction of ‘bubbles’)</p> <p>Social distancing with those outside your ‘bubble’/cohort. Social distancing recommended for staff e.g. in staff room</p>
Communications	<p>General communications to parents setting out measures introduced and importance of following guidance (e.g. stay at home/get test if symptomatic)</p> <p>“Likely close contact” letter to at-risk cohort(s)</p>

	<p>General “warn & inform” letter if increased cases (e.g. across whole year group) but no clear cohort</p> <p>If concerns about media enquiries contact NYCC, who will be able to advise on a reactive press statement</p>
<p>Attendance</p>	<p>High quality face-to-face education remains a government priority. The Education Contingency Framework states that attendance restrictions should only ever be considered as a short-term measure and as a last resort:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For individual settings, on public health advice in extreme cases where other recommended measures have not broken chains of in-setting transmission; or • Across an area, on government advice in order to suppress or manage a dangerous variant and to prevent unsustainable pressure on the NHS. <p>High-quality remote learning should be provided for all students well enough to learn from home.</p> <p>For any restriction on attendance that is put in place schools need to ensure they are following the guidance in the Education Contingency Framework on providing remote education and safeguarding.</p>

General “Warn and inform” letter (suggested wording)

“I am writing to let you know there has been a [number of] confirmed case[s] of COVID-19 within the school community, and your child may have had contact with them during their infectious period.

Schools are no longer expected to identify the close contacts of cases of COVID-19 (unless in very exceptional circumstances) - this is done by the national Test and Trace system.

Test and Trace may be in touch with you in the coming days if your child is identified as a close contact by them, but as a school we will not pass personal contact details on to the case[s] to share with Test and Trace.

Children who are close contacts of someone with COVID-19 are no longer required to isolate unless they develop symptoms. However they are advised to undertake daily lateral flow testing for 7 days as they are at a higher risk of developing COVID-19 in the days after the contact.

Your child should continue to attend school unless they develop symptoms of COVID-19 or are unwell. If they do develop symptoms, please keep your child at home and book a PCR test for them.

The 3 main symptoms of COVID-19 remain a fever (temperature 37.8°C or higher), a new continuous cough, or a change to/loss of taste or smell. However, other commonly reported symptoms of recent variants include headache, sore throat, tiredness, and cold-like symptoms, so please be aware of these as well and stay at home and seek further testing if you are in any doubt.”

If secondary school add:

“Regular lateral flow testing will also help to identify individuals with COVID-19 who are not displaying symptoms. All pupils, staff and people they live with are strongly encouraged to continue to test themselves twice a week using lateral flow tests.”

Likely close contact letter (suggested wording) – N.B. inform public health team if cohort identified where likely in-setting transmission (including line list + further details on cohort size, nature of contact)

“Dear parent,

I am writing to let you know there has been a [number of] confirmed case[s] of COVID-19 within the school community.

Whilst schools are no longer required to undertake detailed contact tracing for cases of COVID-19 (unless in very exceptional circumstances), following discussion with the North Yorkshire Public Health team we have been advised to **recommend that your child undertakes daily lateral flow testing for 7 days as it is likely that they have been in close contact with a positive case.**

If your child tests positive then they should self- isolate for 10 days as per government guidance but they do not need a confirmatory PCR test unless they have symptoms. They can end their isolation from Day 6 if they have tested negative on a lateral flow test (LFD) on day 5 & day 6 (tests must be 24 hours apart). If you do not have a negative result on day 5 & 6 you should continue to test until you have two negative tests, or you reach day 10, whichever is soonest.

Anyone who has tested positive on a PCR test in the last 90 days is not required to have a further PCR test unless they develop new symptoms. However, they should continue with regular lateral flow testing.

Additional lateral flow tests can be ordered online at <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>, or by calling 119. They can also be collected from many local pharmacies.

PCR tests can be accessed via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. A list of local testing facilities and opening times is available here: <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-testing>.

Test and Trace may be in touch with you in the coming days if your child is directly identified as a close contact by the case, but as a school we will not pass personal contact details on to cases to share with Test and Trace. Children who are close contacts of someone with COVID-19 are no longer required to isolate unless they develop symptoms.

The 3 main symptoms of COVID-19 remain a fever (temperature 37.8°C or higher), a new continuous cough, or a change to/loss of taste or smell. However, other commonly reported symptoms of recent variants include headache, sore throat, tiredness, and cold-like symptoms, so please be aware of these as well and stay at home and seek further testing if you are in any doubt.”

Useful links

Education guidance

Schools COVID-19 Operational Guidance – [Schools COVID-19 operational guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance)

Early years & childcare Guidance – [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/actions-for-early-years-and-childcare-providers-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak)

Further Education Operational Guidance – [Actions for FE colleges and providers during the coronavirus outbreak - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/actions-for-fe-colleges-and-providers-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak)

Special Schools Operational Guidance – [SEND and specialist settings: additional COVID-19 operational guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/send-and-specialist-settings-additional-covid-19-operational-guidance)

Education Contingency Framework – [Contingency framework: education and childcare settings \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/guidance/contingency-framework-education-and-childcare-settings)

Vaccination guidance for schools – [COVID-19 vaccination programme for children and young people: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/covid-19-vaccination-programme-for-children-and-young-people-guidance-for-schools)

Use of PPE in education and childcare – [Use of PPE in education, childcare and children’s social care - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/use-of-ppe-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care)

After school/out of school settings – [COVID-19: Actions for out-of-school settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/covid-19-actions-for-out-of-school-settings)

Transport to schools/colleges guidance – [Dedicated transport to schools and colleges COVID-19 operational guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/dedicated-transport-to-schools-and-colleges-covid-19-operational-guidance)

General COVID-19 guidance

Non-household contacts – [Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection who do not live with the person - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person)

Cleaning non-healthcare settings – [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings outside the home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/covid-19-cleaning-of-non-healthcare-settings-outside-the-home)

Workplace guidance – [NHS Test and Trace in the workplace - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-in-the-workplace)

Guidance for pregnant employees – [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): advice for pregnant employees - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees)

How to stay safe and help prevent the spread of coronavirus – [Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/coronavirus-how-to-stay-safe-and-help-prevent-the-spread)