

19 July 2021

Dear parents and carers,

Re: Changes to contact tracing in education and childcare settings

Further to my letter regarding changes for our operations in September, I can now provide you with further detail regarding how we will respond to positive cases. The systems guidance outlined below will be applied to all test results from 19th July onwards.

One of the key changes that will take place from 19 July is that education and childcare settings will no longer be asked to conduct routine contact tracing. As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with either the positive case – or in the case of children – the parents, carers or guardian of the positive case to identify close contacts.

NHS Test and Trace already manages the contact tracing process for the rest of society – including children who have recorded a positive PCR test – and has expertise in supporting people to identify close contacts.

Self-isolating and taking a test

1. If your child has symptoms, they and other members of the household should self-isolate. **You should not send your child to school if they are displaying any of the following symptoms:**
 - **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
 - **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
 - **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

You should inform us that your child is not attending school because of Covid symptoms. **You should immediately order a PCR test for them.** If the PCR result is negative, your child can end their self-isolation and return to school. Other members of their household can also stop self-isolating (unless instructed to self-isolate for other reasons). If the PCR result is positive, your child, other members of their household and any close contacts identified by NHS Track and Trace must self-isolate until 10 days after the onset of symptoms.

If your child has a positive result from a **lateral flow device (LFD) test**, they and other members of the household should self-isolate – and you should contact us to inform us of this result. **You should immediately order a confirmatory PCR test.** If the confirmatory test is taken within two days and the result is negative, your child can return to school and other members of their household can stop self-isolating (unless instructed to self-isolate for other reasons). If the confirmatory PCR test is positive (or is taken more than two days after the LFD), other members of their household and any close contacts identified by NHS Track and Trace must self-isolate until 10 days after the LFD test.

PCR tests can be booked online through the [NHS Test & Trace website](#) or by calling 119.

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PCR test results will be recorded with NHS Test and Trace automatically, but you should also communicate the result to the education or childcare setting during term time or summer provision.

Contact tracing

If your child gets a positive PCR test result, NHS Test and Trace will contact you, using the details you registered when ordering the PCR test. You and/or your child will be asked a series of specific questions designed to identify who your child has been in close contact with. Being in an education or childcare setting with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 will not necessarily mean a person is identified as a close contact.

You will be asked to provide the contact details, if you know them, of any of the individuals – or their parents or guardians – who have been identified as close contacts. NHS Test and Trace will then get in touch with these close contacts and provide appropriate instructions or advice (see below).

Self-isolation and/or testing of close contacts

At present, anyone identified as a close contact is legally required to self-isolate and must not attend school. Anyone identified as a non-household close contact by NHS Track and Trace must self-isolate until 10 days after the date of their most recent contact with that person. If they live in the same household, they must self-isolate until 10 days after the date of that person developing symptoms (see point 1 above) or, if that person was asymptomatic, the date of their test (see point 2 above). NHS Test and Trace will notify you of the day on which the self-isolation period ends.

Close contacts are also advised to take a PCR test. If the test result is negative, **they must still complete the full self-isolation period**, as the test will not detect all positive cases. If the result is positive, they will need to self-isolate for a further 10 days – and NHS Test and Trace will contact them to identify any close contacts.

From 16 August, if the close contact is under 18, they will not have to self-isolate (in line with the policy for fully vaccinated adults) but will be asked to take an PCR test immediately, other than for very young children identified as non-household contacts, and they will not need to self-isolate while awaiting the results of the test. If the PCR test is positive, **they will be required to self-isolate for 10 days from the date of the test**. NHS Test and Trace will then get in touch to identify close contacts (see points 5 and 6 above). Further guidance on these changes to self-isolation will be provided shortly.

If at any point you are not sure about what to do please contact us in school and we can advise you of the actions to take. The most important thing to remember is that **your child should not attend school if they are displaying symptoms and that the whole household should self-isolate if anyone within the house is symptomatic or has a positive LFD result. In all instances you should then seek to arrange a PCR test as soon as possible.**

We recognise how difficult the past 18 months have been and the sacrifices that all of the families have had to make. This has been an enormously challenging time for everyone and we would like to take the opportunity to thank you for everything you have done.

Yours faithfully,

Matthew Vickers

Lead Principal