

Public Health Updates: 25th February 2022

Updates to National Guidance

1. Changes to Testing

From Monday 21 February, the Government removed the guidance for staff and students in most education and childcare settings to undertake twice-weekly asymptomatic testing. Staff and students of secondary age and above in SEND settings, alternative provision settings, and SEND units within mainstream settings or equivalent in further education colleges are advised to continue twice-weekly testing.

2. Changes to self-isolation

From Thursday 24 February, the Government removed the **legal** requirement to self-isolate following a positive test. However, the guidance [COVID-19: people with COVID-19 and their contacts](#), published 24 February 2022 clearly outlines that: **Children and young people and staff with COVID-19 should not attend their education setting while they are infectious. They may take an LFD test from 5 days after their symptoms started (or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms) followed by another one the next day (24 hours apart). If both these test results are negative, they should return to their educational setting, as long as they feel well enough to do so and do not have a temperature.**

If no negative test results are received prior to day 10 then self-isolation finishes at midnight on day 10

3. Risk Assessments

Until at least 1st April 2022 there remains the legal requirement for settings to assess (and take reasonable actions to mitigate) the risks from COVID-19 in line with national and Public Health advice and guidance. Settings must regularly review and update their risk assessments in light of the changes to national guidance, and advice from Public Health, ensuring that they accurately capture the prevailing measures they have in place to mitigate the risks from COVID-19 to their staff, pupils and visitors.

4. Close contacts, isolation and daily testing of close contacts

From 24th February 2022, fully vaccinated close contacts and those under the age of 18 (including siblings) are no longer required to test daily for 7 days. The legal requirement for close contacts who are not fully vaccinated to self-isolate has also been removed.

5. DfE Contingency Framework

The contingency framework describes the principles of managing local outbreaks of COVID-19 (including responding to variants of concern) in education and childcare settings. This document has been updated, 24th February 2022, and the thresholds used by settings as an indication for when to seek public health advice if they are concerned have been updated.

For most education and childcare settings, these include:

- a higher than previously experienced and/or rapidly increasing number of staff or student absences due to COVID-19 infection
- evidence of severe disease due to COVID-19, for example if a pupil, student, child or staff member is admitted to hospital due to COVID-19
- a cluster of cases where there are concerns about the health needs of vulnerable staff or students within the affected group

For special schools, alternative provision, SEND/AP units within schools and colleges, open and secure children's homes and settings that operate with 20 or fewer children, pupils, students and staff at any one time:

- 2 children, pupils, students and staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period and/or there are concerns about the health needs of vulnerable individuals within the affected group

[Please see full updated document](#)

6. Control Measures

Setting should continue to comply with the control measures set out in the [DfE Schools COVID-19 operational guidance](#)

You should:

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone.
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes.
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.
4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Updates to Local Guidance

7. Bubbles and Mixing

The [DfE Schools COVID-19 operational guidance](#) no longer outlines the requirement for bubbles or grouping pupils in cohorts; however, this may be reviewed with the local public health team should there be an outbreak in a setting as outlined in the [DfE Contingency Framework](#).