

# COVID-19 School Settings Response Procedure

This information should be used by leadership and management of primary, secondary and special schools, and alternative provision for schools. Please ensure that this flowchart is read in conjunction with listed guidance and seek further advice from DfE, the Local Authority or Public Health England in the event of 5 or more (2 or more in special schools or alternative provision) linked positive case/s.

## Is the pupil/staff member displaying COVID-19 symptoms?

- High temperature
- New continuous cough
- Loss of, or change to, sense of taste or smell

1. Arrange for the symptomatic individual to go home.
2. (If applicable) If a pupil is awaiting collection, move them to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door or, if not possible, somewhere that is at least 2 metres away from other people and ensure appropriate adult supervision. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. Staff caring for the pupil should wear appropriate PPE if social distancing cannot be maintained (for example if the child is very young or is a child with complex needs)<sup>1</sup>. The individual with symptoms may need access to the toilet. This should not be used by others and should be cleaned in line with guidance following the individual leaving the school. If more than one pupil has symptoms, where possible, they should be isolated separately.
3. Send the symptomatic individual home, instructing:
  - a. The symptomatic individual to get a PCR test for COVID-19 and report the result to the school once known.
  - b. The symptomatic individual to self-isolate for 10 days (or until a negative PCR result has been reported and the individual feels well). The individual must ensure they feel well before returning to school.
4. Schools will be provided with a small number of home testing kits that they can give directly to parents/carers/staff who develop symptoms at school, where they think providing one will significantly increase the likelihood of them getting tested.
5. Arrange for areas where the symptomatic individual has been to be cleaned and disinfected<sup>2</sup>. Areas that they have passed through (e.g. corridors) should be cleaned thoroughly as normal. Any surfaces that the symptomatic person has come into direct contact with must be cleaned and disinfected e.g. high-contact areas such as handles, grab-rails.
6. Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any pupils who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate unless:
  - a. they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a PCR test)
  - b. the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive and the contact is an adult who is not fully vaccinated (and not medically exempt from vaccination)<sup>4</sup>.
  - c. they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace
7. In an emergency, call 999 if someone is seriously ill. Anyone with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms should not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

## Results of the COVID-19 test

### Positive

1. If informed by pupil check authenticity of test results e.g. contact parents. If a staff member or pupil tests LFT positive, they should book a confirmatory PCR test **within** two days. If the PCR test is negative, they can end their self-isolation. If a negative PCR test is received more than 2 days after the date of their initial LFT test, then the duty to self-isolate remains.
2. Notify the Local Authority via the online form ([schools.leicester.gov.uk/informtheLA](https://schools.leicester.gov.uk/informtheLA)). If you have any questions about a case, please check the FAQ document on the extranet. If you have a concern about an outbreak please contact Leicester City Council's Public Health team at [c19publichealth@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:c19publichealth@leicester.gov.uk). For support for an outbreak, you can also contact the PHE Coronavirus Response Centre on 03442 254 524. All positive cases will be contacted by the Test and Trace system.
3. The pupil/ staff member will be told by NHS Test and Trace to self-isolate at home for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms or a positive test result for asymptomatic individuals and follow the 'Stay at Home' guidance<sup>3</sup>.
4. Pupils/staff should return to school only if they no longer have symptoms, other than cough or loss of/ change to sense of smell/taste. This is because these symptoms can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. If the pupil/ staff member is isolating because of a positive test result but did not have any symptoms, and they develop COVID-19 symptoms within their isolation period, a new 10 day isolation period must be started by counting 10 full days from the day following the symptom onset.
5. Pupils/staff should not be asked to provide a negative test result before returning to school.
6. NHS Test and Trace will contact the positive person/their family to identify their contacts. Contacts will be advised to take a PCR test as soon as practicable. Any contacts who are under 18 or are fully vaccinated (14 days have passed since last dose) or exempt do not need to isolate. Anyone else will have to isolate for 10 days.
7. The school should be aware of any students or staff clustered in a consistent group or cohort with a positive case. If a staff member, who is known to be unvaccinated, is a close contact of a child who has tested positive this staff member should be advised to self-isolate for 10 days.
8. Send letter/email (a template letter will be provided) to parents of pupils who have been in close contact with the positive case advising them to:
  - a. Get a PCR test. The child does not need to isolate and should continue to attend school while they wait for the result.
  - b. Get tested for COVID-19 if they develop symptoms and inform the school of their results.
9. Record absences with the appropriate code.

### Inconclusive

The pupil/staff member should have another test. If the pupil/staff member had a test but have not had symptoms, they do not need to self-isolate whilst awaiting another test. If the pupil/staff member had a test because they had symptoms, they must keep self-isolating and have another test within 8 days of their symptoms starting.

### Negative

Pupil/staff member can return to school but only if they are feeling well and their fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

However, if an individual has been asked to self-isolate as a result of contact with a positive case of COVID-19 because they are over 18 and not fully vaccinated and not medically exempt, they must continue to isolate for the full 10 days regardless of a negative test result.

## Managing a possible outbreak

| Task               | Action   |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>1. Identify</b> | <p>DfE guidance presents thresholds that should trigger the setting to undertake an additional assessment and seek advice as necessary. Thresholds are described as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 cases or 10% (whichever is reached first) test-confirmed cases of COVID- 19 (either PCR testing or LFD with follow-up PCR) within 10 days, among students or staff clustered in a <b>consistent group or cohort</b>. Dates should be calculated based on illness onset, or test date if asymptomatic. <b>(Please note this is 2 or more cases for special schools)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Or</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of severe of illness e.g. students or staff members admitted to hospital or a death as a result of a COVID–19 infection (PCR or LFD with follow up PCR) as the setting may require advice on risk assessment and communication.</li> </ul> <p>If you receive notification of this, you will need to contact <a href="mailto:c19publichealth@leicester.gov.uk">c19publichealth@leicester.gov.uk</a>.</p> |
| <b>2. Report</b>   | <p>Contact the Leicester City Council Public Health team on <a href="mailto:c19publichealth@leicester.gov.uk">c19publichealth@leicester.gov.uk</a>.</p> <p>Notify the Local Authority of the cases via the online form (<a href="https://schools.leicester.gov.uk/informtheLA">schools.leicester.gov.uk/informtheLA</a>).</p> <p>The East Midlands Public Health England Health Protection Team (PHE HPT) can also be contacted for help and advice (especially outside business hours). The details are the PHE Coronavirus Response Centre on 03442 254 524.</p>   |
| <b>3. Respond</b>  | <p>Your local public health teams will work with you to assess the risks and advise you of what actions to take.</p> <p>Depending on the outcome, your local PHE HPT and Local Authority may establish an Outbreak Control Team to help support you to manage the situation. Any decisions about further potential measures will be decided in conjunction with you and public health, with input from DfE if there is a large outbreak.</p> <p>If the advice from the local public health teams is to partially or fully close the building, resulting in the setting not being fully open to all pupils/students, then you should notify the Department for Education via the Education Setting Status form. Refer to ‘School attendance: guidance for schools’ or search the title on GOV.UK for details.</p>   |

### Information that may be requested from you

Details of the enquiry/cases:

- Record of pupils and staff in each group
- When the individual(s) became unwell or a test was undertaken
- When they were last present in the setting
- Nature of the roles/job undertaken by any staff affected
- Known links between the individual(s) with covid-19 (in or out of the setting)
- Number of people with which the individual(s) had close contact
- Nature of the environment (for example layout and nature of the building)
- Details of control measures
- Has there been any contact with other agencies? For example, local authority, health and safety executive (HSE), health and therapeutic services

## Definitions

A **PCR Test** involves the processing of human nasal and throat swab samples in a laboratory to identify if the viral genetic material is present from its earlier infectious stage. If present in the person's sample, the test result will come back as positive usually within 48 hours.

A **Lateral Flow Test** involves the processing of human nasal and throat swab samples with a Lateral Flow device. The device detects a protein (antigen) produced by the virus at its most infectious stage. If present in the person's sample, a coloured line appears on the device that can be read between 20-30 minutes.

### Close contact:

- anyone who lives in the same household as another person who has COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19
- anyone who has had any of the following types of contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19:
  - face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
  - been within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
  - been within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day)
- travelled in the same vehicle or plane as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

### Contacts who are exempt from isolation

From 16 August, someone will not be required to self-isolate if they are notified they have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years 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 and have an exemption from their doctor

Fully vaccinated means that they have been vaccinated with an MHRA approved COVID-19 vaccine in the UK, and at least 14 days have passed since they received the recommended doses of that vaccine.

## Types of actions you may need to put in place



Enhanced hygiene, hand washing and cleaning regimes, and use of personal protective equipment (PPE).



Increased staff/pupils/parents/carers' awareness of and adherence to the system of controls.



Temporary partial closure to a setting or building.

## Managing media communications around positive cases

Be aware that once you notify parents of the case the media are likely to pick up on this. The council's press office is being informed of all cases and is confirming numbers and locations to the local media if asked. The media are likely to contact you for a statement about what action you are taking. A template statement for you to adapt is here:

*Name of headteacher of name of school* said: "We were informed that a pupil/student/staff member had tested positive last night/this morning. We notified parents of the relevant contacts as soon as we were able to and these pupils/students have been asked to take a PCR test. This affects (number) pupils/students/members of staff. We will be carrying out a deep clean in the school, but all other classes will continue as normal."

If you need help with your statement please contact the council's media team at [pressdesk@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:pressdesk@leicester.gov.uk)

### References/ Notes:

Guidance is subject to changes and updates so please check the latest guidance using the links below:

- 1. Updated source: Guidance on what to do if someone in schools becomes unwell or if there is a positive case/s confirmed**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#section-1-public-health-advice-to-minimise-coronavirus-covid-19-risks>
- 2. Source: COVID-19 decontamination in non-healthcare settings**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings#principles-of-cleaning-after-the-case-has-left-the-setting-or-area>
- 3. Source: Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>
- 4. Source: Self-isolation removed for double jabbed close contacts from 16 August**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/self-isolation-removed-for-double-jabbed-close-contacts-from-16-august>