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Rational

Since March 2022, when the final Covid restrictions were lifted, the UK Health and Security Agency (UKHSA) has advised that COVID-19 should be managed like other respiratory infections, such as flu.

COVID-19 is now considered to be low risk to children and young people, according to the government guidelines. Currently, there are no longer specific rules relating to COVID-19 in schools. However, Covid 19 still presents a threat to some individuals and the normal workings of the school during the Autumn and winter months, especially when there is an increase in the cases of flu and other respiratory infections.

This policy offers clear guidance in helping to manage the possible spread of Covid-19 and to protect the school community, children, parents, carers and individuals so that the school can continue to function effectively, should there be an increase in cases of Covid 19.

What happens if a staff member or a child has symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19?

Children and young people aged 18 and under who test positive for COVID-19, the advice is to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for **three days**. This is because children and young people tend to be infectious to other people for less time than adults.

Adults with a positive COVID-19 test result are advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for **five days**, which is when they are most infectious.

The UKHSA has also published public health guidance on [living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19](#).

Who can still test?

As individuals are now mixing in an open society, regular testing within a setting is no longer as effective as it once was. Instead, the most effective protection against severe disease from COVID-19 for everyone, including those at higher risk from COVID-19, is to get vaccinated.

People at risk of serious illness from COVID-19 will continue to get free tests to use if they develop symptoms, along with NHS and adult social care staff and those in other high-risk settings. Local Health Protection Teams (HPT) may implement outbreak testing for specific settings at their discretion.

Public health guidance on the actions [people with symptoms of a respiratory infection](#) should take to help reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 and passing it on to others is available.

Vaccines remain the best weapon against this virus. By getting vaccinated, children, young people and staff can increase their protection against COVID-19.

Resources, including immunisation guidance are available for parents and young people, which can be found [here](#).

What measures should we take in school to stop the spread?

As well as following the UKHSA guidance signposted, we have in place baseline infection prevention and control measures that will help to manage the spread of infection:

- Reinforcing good hygiene practices such as regular hand washing and cleaning.
- Ensuring occupied spaces are well-ventilated and let fresh air in.
- Ensuring all eligible groups are enabled and supported to take up the [offer of national vaccination programmes including COVID-19 and flu](#)

Remote education for pupils who have COVID-19.

The school will consider remote learning for pupils, if this is appropriate, that test positive for COVID-19 but who feel well enough to learn but are following advice to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for three days.

Immunosuppression - a weakened immune system

Immunosuppression means you have a weakened immune system due to a particular health condition or because you are on medication or treatment that suppresses your immune system. People who are immunosuppressed, or who have specific other medical conditions, may have a reduced ability to fight infections and other diseases, including COVID-19.

Most people with immunosuppression will be under the care of a hospital specialist and/or known to their GP. As a result of this they will usually be eligible for either or both of:

- additional vaccines including COVID-19 boosters
- COVID-19 treatments

Further information click on the following links [vaccination](#) and [treatments](#) below. If you are in one of these groups, consider following the guidance below on keeping yourself safe.

Keeping yourself safe

The following advice on 'keeping yourself safe' is aimed at adults. Children and young people are recommended to continue to attend education, unless they are advised otherwise by their clinician. Attending education is hugely important for children and young people's health and their future.

If you have been advised by the NHS that you are in one of these groups, you are advised to:

- ensure you have had all of the vaccines you are eligible to receive
- continue to follow any condition-specific advice you may have been given by your specialist

You are advised to try to avoid contact with people who have symptoms of COVID-19 or other respiratory infections. A detailed description of COVID-19 symptoms can be found in [guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19](#).

If you have visitors to your home, consider ventilating your rooms by opening windows and doors to let fresh air in. More advice on [ventilating your home](#) can be found on GOV.UK.

Consider asking visitors to your home to take additional precautions, such as keeping their distance. COVID-19 tests are no longer free for the general public, but you may wish to ask visitors to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test before visiting. You might also consider asking them to wear a face covering and you may want to wear a face covering yourself.

If it feels right for you, work from home if you can. If you cannot work from home, speak to your employer about what arrangements they can make to reduce your risk. It may be that you are entitled to a [Reasonable Adjustment under the Equality Act](#). See [Public health principles for reducing the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections in the workplace](#)

If you are too ill to work, you may be [eligible for Statutory Sick Pay](#).

When out and about, you may want to try to keep your distance from others if that feels right for you, and consider reducing the time you spend in crowded spaces or anywhere that is enclosed or poorly ventilated. Wash your hands regularly and avoid touching your face.

Consider wearing a well-fitting face covering in crowded public spaces. Although face coverings are primarily worn to protect others, because they cover the nose and mouth, which are the main routes of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 infection, they may also provide some limited protection to the wearer.

Further advice about face coverings can be found in guidance on [living safely with respiratory infections including COVID-19](#).

COVID-19 vaccines

If you have a weakened immune system due to a health condition or medical treatment, and you are aged 6 months or over, you are eligible for a [COVID-19 vaccination this autumn](#) if it has been at least 3 months since your last vaccination.

This is to help improve any protection you may have built from previous vaccination or infection.

By having a further dose of vaccine, you may reduce your chance of catching the COVID-19 infection. If you do catch COVID-19, the symptoms may be less severe and the illness shorter than if you had not had the extra vaccination.

[Further information, including about those who may need an extra dose this autumn, is available](#). You should receive a letter inviting you to book. If not, check with your GP or specialist whether you are eligible.

The autumn campaign began on 11 September 2023 in England, with those with a weakened immune system being able to book from this date. Vaccination of residents in care homes also started on 11 September 2023.

How to book

Those eligible for a vaccine can [book on the national system](#). It might help to take the vaccination invite letter, or an NHS letter describing your condition or treatment, or a repeat prescription slip with you.

[You can book or manage a COVID-19 vaccination online through the NHS website.](#)

If you can't book online, phone 119 free of charge, 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday or 9am to 1pm Saturday and Sunday. You can ask someone else to do this for you. Please ensure you have your NHS number at hand. If you need an interpreter, use text phone 18001 119 or the [NHS British Sign Language interpreter service](#).

The NHS strongly encourages those with a weakened immune system to take up their offer for the autumn 2023 COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible to ensure they have the highest possible level of protection.

[Further information on COVID-19 vaccinations](#) is available on NHS.UK.

COVID-19 treatments

The NHS is offering treatments to those people with COVID-19 who are at highest risk of becoming seriously ill and who are aged 12 years or above. Not all treatments are suitable for people aged 12 to 17 years.

The list of eligible people who are offered these treatments is regularly reviewed and is available on the [NHSE](#) and [GOV.UK](#) websites. The list currently includes some people who have:

- Down's syndrome, or another chromosomal disorder that affects their immune system
- certain types of cancer or have received treatment for certain types of cancer
- sickle cell disease
- certain conditions affecting their blood
- chronic kidney disease (CKD) stage 4 or 5
- severe liver disease
- had an organ transplant
- certain autoimmune or inflammatory conditions (such as rheumatoid arthritis or inflammatory bowel disease)
- HIV or AIDS and have a weakened immune system
- a condition affecting their immune system
- a condition affecting the brain or nervous system, such as multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, motor neurone disease, myasthenia gravis, Huntington's disease, Parkinson's disease or certain types of dementia
- certain lung conditions or treatments for lung conditions

This list is a summary and does not cover everything.

If you are unsure whether you are eligible, speak to your doctor or hospital specialist who can advise you.

A broader group of patients (currently those aged 18 years and over, and with underlying health conditions) may also be able to take part in the [PANORAMIC clinical study](#) if they test positive for COVID-19 and are symptomatic.

COVID-19 testing

In England, patients eligible for COVID-19 treatments can access LFD tests from the government.

If you are eligible for COVID-19 treatments, please make sure you have a supply of LFD tests at home so that you can test yourself quickly if you develop symptoms of COVID-19.

[Symptoms of COVID-19, flu and other respiratory infections](#) include:

- a high temperature
- unexplained tiredness or lack of energy
- shortness of breath
- a loss of, or change to, your normal sense of smell or taste

You can [order free NHS rapid lateral flow test kits](#) on GOV.UK or by calling NHS 119. Test kits contain instructions and links to support for those who need assistance in testing.

You can also now use tests purchased from a pharmacy or shop.

If you test positive

If you test positive, you should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people. Further advice about staying at home can be found in [guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19](#).

The way in which you access COVID-19 treatments has recently changed, and is now managed by your local health system. If your COVID-19 test result is positive, follow the information for accessing treatments on the [NHS COVID-19 treatments](#) page.

If you are eligible for treatment, it is important to start the treatment as soon as you can. To be effective, treatments for COVID-19 need to be given quickly after your symptoms start.

If you test negative and you still feel unwell

If your test is negative but you still have symptoms, you should take another test on each of the next 2 days (3 tests in total over 3 days).

If you continue to feel unwell, you should seek healthcare advice via your GP or NHS 111. If it is an emergency, you should call 999.