

September 2021

25/08/2021

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for managing COVID-19 within your settings and keeping our children, young people and families safe throughout the pandemic. We now know that the risk of severe illness in children and young people is low. In contrast, there are significant harms associated with missed education.

The overarching objective of recent Government guidance focuses on maximising the number of children and young people in face-to face education or childcare and minimising any disruption, in a way that best manages the COVID-19 risk. I have highlighted key areas below:

1. Control measures to continue with

- Good hygiene for everyone
- Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes
- Keep occupied spaces well ventilated
- Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing positive cases

2. Tracing close contacts and isolation

From September, education settings will be moving away from contact tracing for single cases to an outbreak management approach.

- Cases and their contacts will now be followed up by NHS Test and Trace.
- Close contacts of a positive COVID-19 case in England aged under 18 years and 6 months and/or those fully vaccinated are exempt from the legal duty to self-isolate.
- Instead, NHS Test and Trace will advise close contacts to take a [PCR test](#)

3. Testing

- All secondary school pupils and Further Education students should undertake 2 on-site lateral flow device (LFD) tests 3 to 5 days apart, on their return in the autumn term.
- Settings may commence testing from 3 working days before the start of term and can stagger return of pupils/students across the first week.
- Cases identified in the test-on-return period should not trigger escalation as they are unlikely to have acquired their infection in the setting.
- Pupils/students and staff should continue to test twice weekly at home until the end of September, when this will be reviewed.
- Staff and students identified as a close contact by NHS Test and Trace should be encouraged to take a PCR test and regular LFD tests as per Stay at Home guidance.

4. Thresholds

The recently-published [Contingency framework: education and childcare settings](#) sets out thresholds for managing COVID-19 and outlines other actions that may be required.

Thresholds that should trigger the setting to undertake an additional assessment and seek advice as necessary include:

- 5 cases or 10% (whichever is reached first) test-confirmed cases of COVID-19 (either PCR testing or LFD testing with follow-up PCR) within 10 days, among students or staff clustered in a consistent group or cohort. Dates should be calculated based on illness on-set, or date of positive PCR test if asymptomatic

- Evidence of severe 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

5. Additional control measures in education settings

If risk assessment by a public health professional indicates an outbreak and transmission is occurring further control measures may be advised, including the following:

- Reintroduction of face coverings
- Additional asymptomatic LFD testing, including reinstating onsite testing
- Advice to anyone (staff or pupil) who is known to be at increased risk of severe infection
- Other proportionate measures such as reducing crowding through temporarily suspending assemblies or other events that bring large groups together

6. Face coverings

Face coverings are no longer advised for pupils/students, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. The Government has removed the requirement to wear face coverings in law, but it still expects and recommends that they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where you may come into contact with people you don't normally meet. This includes public transport and dedicated transport to school or college.

7. Vulnerable children

On-site provision should in all cases be retained for vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers. If settings must temporarily stop on-site provision on public health advice, they should discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children and young people with the Lancashire County Council.

8. Vaccination

- Children aged 12 to 15 can get vaccinated against COVID-19 if they live with someone who is more likely to get infections or they have a condition that means they're at high risk from COVID-19. [Click here for more information](#)
- 16 and 17-year-olds can book via the [NHS](#) or via www.healthierlsc.co.uk/getmyjab
- 17 and 9 months or older can book via the [NHS](#)

Once again, I would like to thank you all for your continued support and co-operation.

Yours sincerely



Dr Sakthi Karunanithi
Director of Public Health