

April 2022

Post April 1st Covid 19 management

Dear Parent/Carer

I am sure you will be aware that since the 1st April 2022, the Government has withdrawn free Coronavirus testing. Schools are no longer receiving lateral flow test kits and these, alongside PCR tests, will no longer be readily and freely available to the public. The COVID-19 specific operational guidance for schools has now been withdrawn from GOV.UK. The UK Health Security Agency has released some guidance to schools which we thought would be helpful to share with parents:

- Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and where possible avoid contact with other people. They can go back to school when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough.
- If a child or young person has a positive COVID-19 test result they should try to stay at home and where possible avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test (or until they no longer have a high temperature if this remains after 3 days). The risk of passing the infection on to others is much lower after 3 days if they feel well and do not have a high temperature.
- Children and young people who live with someone who has a positive COVID-19 test result should continue to attend as normal.
- Any staff who have a positive COVID-19 test result should try to stay at home for 5 days after the day they took the test.

Some of the guidance is quite vague, so we thought it might be helpful to provide some clarity for parents where we are able to:

Will the Coronavirus Risk Assessment still be in place?

From the 1st April, schools are no longer required to have Coronavirus Risk Assessments in place. However, we will maintain our outbreak management plans and intend to have an infectious disease risk assessment. Schools will also continue to apply good hygiene protocols such as encouraging regular hand washing/cleaning and ventilation.

What if my child develops symptoms at school?

As part of our plan to reduce the spread of any infectious illness, should a child become unwell at school, we will contact parents in the usual way and ask them to collect their child and follow medical advice. This will apply to suspected cases of coronavirus just as it would to sickness bugs or infections such as chicken pox.

What should I do if I think my child has coronavirus?

Obviously, any pupil who is diagnosed by a medical professional to have an infectious illness, including Coronavirus, should follow the relevant guidance around self-care and isolation and notify school in the normal way. As free testing is no longer available, parents should apply the principles of health management as they would for any other illness or infection if they suspect they have Coronavirus. You may find the link below helpful:

[What to do if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\) or symptoms of COVID-19 - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Will remote education still be available?

The legal duty for schools to provide remote education has now been lifted as it was introduced to ensure a continuity of education when children were legally required to isolate, but were not unwell themselves. As has always been the case, schools will not provide remote education for children who are unwell or who are absent for reasons of leave. However, we recognise that some children may still be required to isolate if they are infected with coronavirus or another contagious illness, but are not unwell. This is likely to only be for a very short period of time. Consequently, schools will be able to provide links to relevant learning where this is the case. This may include links to the school website; Oak Academy or other relevant resources.

Will children be offered a vaccination in school?

We have had no indication of a vaccination programme in school beyond what has been delivered by Locala for children aged 12 and above. However, if you would like to find out more about vaccinations for young people, the link below may be helpful:

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccine for children aged 5 to 15 - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

What if my child is considered clinically extremely vulnerable?

Those who were previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable are now no longer considered at greater risk from contracting coronavirus, largely due to the vaccination programme. However, there are exceptions to this, typically those who are immunosuppressed for whom the vaccination may not be so effective. Those considered at greater risk of serious harm from contracting coronavirus are likely to be offered a test through their doctor. Identifying the virus at an early stage enables them to access new treatments to help minimise the impact of Covid on their health. This may be coupled with advice from a medical specialist which is specific to the medical condition of the individual. If parents have any concerns, they should contact the relevant person at their child's school.

I hope you will find this information helpful – we will continue to keep you informed should we receive further advice and clarification.

Kind regards

Natasha Greenough
CEO, The Mast Academy Trust

