

FAQs

What will happen if there is a Covid-19 outbreak in my school?

- If multiple cases of coronavirus appear in your school, an outbreak control team from either the local authority or Public Health England will, if necessary, be assigned to help manage the outbreak. Please note that a formal outbreak control team led by PHE may not be arranged for every school outbreak, this will depend on the numbers affected / school setup etc.
- Public Health England's health protection teams (HPTs) play a vital role locally in responding to any outbreak in schools, providing tailored infection control advice to allow staff to protect themselves and their students.
- The response in every school is likely to be slightly different on account of their specific circumstances. If a contact tracer discovers that a pupil or teacher who tests positive for coronavirus has spent some time in a school while they could be infectious, our processes include taking details of the school and the classes the person attended where possible. They may contact the school for further information.
- They may gather further information about people who may have come into recent close contact with the person with coronavirus so they can be advised to self-isolate and also to ascertain if anyone else is reporting symptoms.
- This may also include finding out if there are any staff or children who may be more vulnerable to severe illness as well as providing the school with information to pass on to wider groups of staff and pupils to reinforce hand and respiratory hygiene messages and remind them to self-isolate if they experience symptoms.
- The process is handled sensitively and in confidence, for instance schools do not announce who the person with coronavirus is.

If I get a notification that I need to self-isolate am I eligible for a test? Can I leave isolation if I get a negative result?

- You should only order a test if you develop symptoms.
- If you do not develop symptoms, you should continue to self-isolate for the 14 day period.
- If you develop symptoms, order a test, and if you receive a negative result, it's important to still apply caution. If your test is negative, you must complete the period of isolation (up to 14 day self-isolation), but your household does not need to self-isolate.
- If you or anyone tested in your household has a positive result, you should continue to self-isolate in line with the national guidance.

Will children who have coronavirus symptoms have their contacts traced?

Contact tracers will contact anyone under 18 who tests positive for coronavirus where possible, but we require parental consent to proceed with gathering information, or alternatively for a parent or carer to provide us with information on behalf of their child.

If a staff member is notified, do they have to report to the school?

If an employee is notified to self-isolate for 14 days because they have come into close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus, and are unable to work as a result, they should notify the school that they are unable to work within the deadline that may have been set in the school's sickness absence policies (or normally within 7 days if you have not set one).

Will the whole school be told to self-isolate if someone tests positive?

Only those who have had close recent contact with someone who then tests positive for COVID-19 will be asked to self-isolate.

What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in my child's school?

If a child/member of staff shows symptoms whilst at school, do all the children/adults within that bubble, who have been in close contact with that person, have to self-isolate whilst they get tested?

When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days.

Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class/group within their education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class/group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

All staff and students who are attending an education setting can have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus.

If a family member tests positive and their child has been in school but not showing any symptoms, their child will begin to self-isolate, but should other children in the child's bubble self-isolate too?

The child as described is a contact of a case. The school would only require risk assessment and follow up if the child then tested positive as well. There would be no need to exclude contacts of a contact.

The HPT would recommend schools interpret which students and staff may fall in to direct close contact or proximity contacts in the individual school setting during the period interest/infectious period for case (although the expected default will be that class contacts and/or 'bubbles' will fall into the category of direct or proximity contacts).

Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class/group within their education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class/group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

Can Children under 5 years of age be tested?

Children under 5 years old in England who have symptoms of coronavirus can be tested. Children aged 11 or under cannot do the swab themselves. Their parent or guardian will have to swab test them.