

Covid-19 update from the Education and Skills Team

Professional Advocates for Children in Education, Governor Support, NQTs, Early Years, the Virtual School for Looked after Children and In Year Fair Access

School Trips – Should I Stay or Should I Go?

There are some additional pieces of information in today's bulletin, many of which are clarification in response to frequently asked questions this week. Several leaders have asked questions about proposed school trips. We have discussed this with our health colleagues and our health and safety colleagues – on this we don't think it is right to give a blanket response because it depends on the trip. Some could argue that taking a small bubble of Year 1 children to look at leaves in the local park is possibly safer than being in the classroom. Large scale coach trips to poorly ventilated buildings such as many theatres will be a different matter. Some areas of the country have extremely high numbers of positive cases this week, others less so. So rather than advise a yes or a no to all, we suggest some careful discussion and risk assessment such as:

- Is the trip indoors or outdoors?
- How well ventilated is the destination likely to be?
- How will you get there?
- What is the incidence of positive cases in the area you plan to visit?

In other words, check your risk assessment in light of the very high number of cases at the moment. The Health & Safety Team will be able to discuss any queries with you if you are struggling with any of these or other questions.

Pauline, Jo and the E&S team

Face coverings in exams

In Friday's email to headteachers, the DfE provided some extra guidance about exams including mocks. Candidates and invigilators can wear face coverings if they want to but the DfE are not expecting this apart from arrival and departure. Also, "for vocational and technical qualifications where the exam or assessment may require more interaction with an invigilator or others, such as a practical demonstration, centres have the flexibility to recommend that face coverings be worn if they deem this appropriate.

The infection prevention measures detailed in the [public health guidance to support exams](#) help to ensure a safe environment for students and staff. These measures continue to apply and should be adhered to."

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Your questions raised and answered by Dr Dewis and the CCT team

Q: If a child does not meet the requirements to end isolation early, are they still able to return to school on Day 10 if they are still testing positive on lateral flow tests?

A: The LFD test is a good indication of infectivity but, as long as the child does not still have a temperature, the evidence is that even with a positive LFD you are unlikely to be infectious after 10 days: hence the guidance below. So, these children can return on day 11 (with day zero as the date of their positive test or onset of symptoms).

“You do not need to take any more LFD tests after the 10th day of your self-isolation period and you may stop self-isolating after this day. This is because you are unlikely to be infectious after the 10th day of your self-isolation period. Even if you have a positive LFD test result on the 10th day of your self-isolation period you do not need to take any more LFD tests after this day and you do not need a follow-up PCR test. If you are concerned you may choose to limit close contact with other people, especially those who are at higher risk of severe illness until 14 days after the start of your self-isolation period.”

[Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)

Q: The letter from Dr Dewis on 07/01/22 states that it is the decision of the family to decide if they undertake a lateral flow test with under 5's if they are a household contact. If they choose not to undertake this test, then what should our response be? Do they need to stay at home for 7 days?

A: The CCT team will support settings to use a range of options to reduce risk:

- Get a PCR test if they can get one – return if test negative but do daily LFTs
- Do daily LFTs if this is acceptable – attend if negative
- Isolate for 10 days if unable or unwilling to test.

Q: Could I clarify, if positive people no longer need a follow up PCR does this mean they will no longer be given a z number?

A: When a positive LFD result is logged on the gov website, that will automatically register the person into the track and trace system which will generate them an individual z code. This code can then be used to identify contacts and for individuals on low incomes to apply for the isolation grant of £500 on the council website. So it is essential to remind people to register their LFD results, if positive.

All about testing

As leaders may know from national media, there has been a change in testing requirements this week. Cases are very high and so a positive LFD test is almost certain to mean that the person has Covid-19 (and most likely Omicron at the moment). Anyone who reports a positive LFD test no longer has to get a confirmatory PCR unless:

- They have symptoms as well (in which case, follow the stay at home guidance [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-or-confirmed-covid-19-infection), , self-isolate and order a PCR)
- They was to claim the Test and Trace Support payment
- They have been advised to take a PCR because they are in a clinically vulnerable group
- They are part of a research programme.

The DfE have made it clear that schools are not expected to trace contacts of a positive case (it being the responsibility of Test and Trace). *However, we are very appreciative of the time leaders spend letting CCT and Jayne Hadfield know what is happening re cases in your schools and academies. Please continue if you can.* Having said this, it is important that there is national intelligence as well – it will be really important that students and anyone else relevant should be strongly encouraged to routinely test twice weekly at home and report results, negative and positive, to Test and Trace and to their school/academy. Schools can access a new [template form](#) for pupils, students and staff to report test results. Primary schools can access a new [template form](#) for staff to report their results. Tests should also be reported online through the [report a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test result](#) page which should only take a couple of minutes.