

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

Changes to isolation

The rules about self-isolation have changed again – it will be completely understandable for parents, carers, staff and school leaders to be feeling confused about what can and can't be done this week. We also may have views about what has been driven by science and what by politics or business. Be that as it may, the latest rules began yesterday and are explained overleaf, courtesy of the DfE.

We have also provided a little more information about trips including some helpful experience from a Derby headteacher. It's been a while since our last exchange of Derby practice so thank you for sharing. We are still all in this together and have been grateful for the beginning for the spirit of sharing that has typified our time over the last couple of years (almost).

Thanks also for sharing your Covid data with us. It isn't happy reading at the moment but we do feel that we have an accurate picture of what is happening in Derby. Our next meeting with our health colleagues takes place tomorrow so we should get a good idea then whether cases in Derby are still climbing or if we have reached the top of the curve, as seems to be happening in London. Either way, we will let you know.

(Members of our team are continuing to make school visits where appropriate and in agreement with school leaders. We test regularly as you do, and have made a decision to go back to our previous practice of only visiting one school per day. We will of course follow individual school risk assessments as we try to keep everybody safe.)

Take care everybody – windows ajar, masks on, chins up.

Pauline, Jo and the E&S team

18 Jan 2022

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Changes to self-isolation

From yesterday, people who have C-19 and who are therefore self-isolating will be able to reduce the time they self-isolate if after 5 full days they test negative on days 5 and 6, using a LFT, and they don't have a temperature. The DfE have provided an example – after testing positive and self-isolating for 5 days, the member of staff or child tests negative on the morning of day 5 and negative on the morning of day 6 so they can return to school immediately on day 6. Test results should be reported to Test and Trace.

If the results of either test are positive, they should stay in self-isolation until they have had 2 negative tests on consecutive days or if they have completed ten days. Anyone who can't take a LFT or who continues with a temperature should complete the full 10 days.

www.gov.uk/government/news/self-isolation-for-those-with-covid-19-can-end-after-five-full-days-following-two-negative-lfd-tests

Top trip tips

Following our advice about trips and risk assessments, the headteacher of Firs has offered some thoughts based on their experience.

Paula says, "We had been really fortunate with very few cases of Covid across school throughout the pandemic so far. Then we went on a school trip.

The issue for us was the coach. We had a child whose Mum had tested positive. Following the school trip, she then tested positive and so did everyone who sat near her on the coach. The teacher very quickly recognised the pattern, and we moved all those who had been near her on the coach to another classroom. We ended up with 8 cases but think we managed to contain it by identifying and separating the group. Sanitiser was used before getting on the bus and all the windows were open on the coach for the whole journey."

At the moment, this is one school where lengthy coach journeys have been put on hold for now. Thanks for sharing, Paula.

For those leaders who plan on going ahead with trips, our Health and Safety team have provided some additional prompts for you to think about, attached at the end of this bulletin.

Vaccinating teenagers – one for secondary leaders

Last week, the second phase of the in-school programme began – you may have been contacted already by the immunization service but if not, you will be soon. There is a ["how to" guide for schools](#) with information and resources, including a template letter that can be used to communicate with parents.

Ventilation

There is a [blog on the importance of ventilation](#) that education staff may find useful. As you know, ventilation is really important and as the weather gets colder, there is a balance to be struck between good air flow and freezing children.

Nose and throat tests

Innova self-test kits are being reintroduced for asymptomatic testing at home to some education and childcare settings. These require both nasal and throat swabs and the test returns results in 30 minutes. Schools should retain some nasal-only swab self-test kits to supply to any pupils who are unable to throat swab. However, if Innova are the only self-test kits available and you have pupils who are unable to throat swab, [a nose-only swab can be taken for these students and pupils](#). All settings will continue to receive either Innova, Orient Gene or Acon-Flowflex self-test kits.

Operation Warm Welcome

If you have pupils now in your school who arrived under Operation Warm welcome, laptops and tablets can be requested using the [get help with technology service](#).

Educational Visits

The DCC Corporate Health and Safety Team have put together some things to consider when deciding to undertake education visits to help you with your decision whether to 'go or not'.

The risk assessment explains the actions schools should take to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. When planning your trips, a full and thorough risk assessment should be undertaken in relation to all educational visits and added to the Evolve system including Covid-19 measures.

As part of the risk assessment consideration should include public health advice, such as:

1. No one should attend if they are symptomatic or tested positive for Covid-19.
2. Hand Hygiene. Take supplies of hand sanitiser (travel size). Check venues have hand washing facilities. Take a travel size first aid kit.
3. Face coverings (Unless Exempt) - ensure we take a supply with us in case people have forgotten or they need replacing.
4. Cleaning. Has the transport provider cleaned the transport before use? If school minibuses have this been cleaned before use and after use of individual groups. What products are being used? Are they appropriate? For example, cleaning products that work against enveloped viruses' products such as selgiene ultra or clinell universal wipes (other similar products available).
5. Ventilation requirements. Adequate ventilation on transport as necessary. Check with the transport company to confirm this.
6. Ask for the venues Covid-19 risk assessment which should include hygiene, cleaning, ventilation, face coverings, any social distancing requirements, QR codes etc, emergency plans. Consider the covid protocols in place at the venue/setting being visited?
7. Type of activity – If it is indoor are face coverings required to be worn (e.g., theatre, cinema). Outdoor – consider hand hygiene – refer to bullet point no 2). Mixing of classes/ size of the group.
8. Transportation (hired in or dedication school transport) - Shared transport is high risk and you should consider the impact of this? consider location, distance from school, type of transport (e.g., taxis, coaches, minibuses), seating arrangements, cleaning if use throughout the day for example, multiple trips/use, duration of the trip.
9. Contingency plans – what action will you take if someone falls ill? See first aid on school risk assessment.
10. Plan B. Arrangements if the visit leader or individuals become ill e.g. are they aware of their roles and responsibilities.

are included as part of that risk assessment.

General guidance about educational visits is available and is supported by specialist advice from the Outdoor Education Advisory Panel (OEAP) <https://oeapng.info/>

You should speak to either your visit provider, commercial insurance company, or the risk protection arrangement (RPA) to assess the protection available.

Consider whether to go ahead with planned international educational visits at this time, recognising the risk of disruption to education resulting from the need to isolate and test on arrival back into the UK. You should refer to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office travel advice and the guidance on international travel before booking and travelling.

The decision for educational visits to go ahead or not as the case may be, ultimately is the Head or School leader based upon the specific situation within the school or the level of Covid cases within the City or Country.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>