

# Coronavirus

(Covid-19)

Guidance for Hackney and City of  
London Schools and Education  
settings

Public Health Hackney and City of London Corporation

February 2021



## Introduction

This guidance is for schools and education settings and provides information for prevention, mitigation and control of Covid-19. We describe the support available locally and how you can manage Covid-19 cases linked to your setting. As this is a dynamic situation, please use this guidance in conjunction with relevant national guidance, including local restrictions and lockdown measures.

### 1. General guidelines to prevent the spread of Covid-19

It is critical that everybody observes the key 'hands, face, space' behaviours to reduce the transmission of Covid-19. It is important to encourage and facilitate regular hand washing throughout the educational day. You can encourage good respiratory hygiene by promoting a 'catch it, kill it, bin it' approach to coughs and sneezes. Cleaning within the buildings should be enhanced with a particular focus on high touch surfaces such as door handles, light switches, work surfaces and electronic devices. Where possible contact between individual groups should be kept to a minimum.

### 2. Managing suspected or symptomatic cases

#### **What should we do if someone in our educational setting has symptoms (a suspected case)?**

The child, young person or staff member must self isolate immediately at home for 10 days from symptom onset (other members of their household must isolate for 10 days and get tested only if symptomatic). Whilst a child or young person is waiting to be collected they must be isolated in a separate room and staff supporting them within 2 metres must wear PPE.

A PCR test should be arranged as soon as possible. The symptomatic child, young person or staff member must continue self isolating if they still have symptoms after 10 days.

If the child, young person or staff member tests negative they can return to their setting (if they are well enough to do so) and their household members can end their self isolation provided:

- everyone they live with who has symptoms tests negative
- everyone in their support bubble who has symptoms tests negative
- they were not told to self isolate for 10 days by NHS Test and Trace

### **What should we do if someone in our education setting has confirmed Covid-19?**

If there has been a positive case in a child, young person or staff member then they must immediately self isolate for a minimum of 10 days from symptom onset (or longer if they still have a fever). The individual or parent/guardian has the responsibility to engage with NHS test and trace.

#### **You must inform:**

**DfE helpline 0800 046 8687** and your corresponding local authority only

**Hackney:** Please use this [online form](#) to notify confirmed cases or email [HLTcorona-support@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:HLTcorona-support@hackney.gov.uk)

**City (CoL):** [alexandra.vastano@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:alexandra.vastano@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

DfE will support you in carrying out a risk assessment to assess exposure to the symptomatic person(s) and to identify those who need to be isolated (usually the class or group the individual was part of).

In certain circumstances (see section 3 below) the DfE may refer you to Public Health England's local health protection team - London Coronavirus Response Cell (PHE LCRC) who will be able to provide further support.

As a Local Authority, we will also contact the headteacher to provide support & guidance as appropriate. It is important that the educational setting engages with this process in a timely manner.

**For all positive cases in Early Years settings**, Ofsted must be also informed: [www.gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-childcare-incident](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-childcare-incident) and complete a [RIDDOR report](#).

### **What should we do if a child, young person or staff member's household member identifies as symptomatic or is confirmed to have Covid-19?**

The individual must self isolate for 10 days alongside the rest of the household at the point of notification and/or awareness. The household member and the child, young person or staff member should apply for a test. If both parties test negative and the child, young person or staff member have no symptoms they may return to their educational setting. Other members of the individuals class or group do not need to self isolate *unless* the child, young person or staff member have a positive test result.

### **What should we do if a child, young person or staff member is a contact and is required to isolate?**

In this case the individual and their household and/ or support bubble are required to isolate for 10 days from contact (even if they test negative part way through the isolation period).

### **Positive Test results for Covid-19**

- NHS Test and trace will contact the person who tested positive to inform them of this result and obtain details of people who may be at risk due to contact.
- Schools and educational settings should complete a risk assessment to assess exposure to the symptomatic individual(s)
- If you are notified that someone who has visited your setting has tested positive for Covid-19 within 10 days of attending your organisation/setting please contact City and Hackney Public Health Team [testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk)
- If anyone who has tested positive for Covid-19 has been at your organisation/setting within the last 72 hours, undertake enhanced cleaning of the areas they visited in line with [Covid-19 cleaning guidance](#).
- The positive case should self-isolate for 10 days from symptom onset. After 10 days they can return only if well and medically fit (fever free) for the past 48 hours. Household contacts and the support bubble must isolate for the full 10 days.

You may wish to contact [testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk) if you have any queries.

### **Negative Test results for Covid-19 (symptomatic person)**

The symptomatic individual can return if they are well and have been medically fit (no fever) for 48 hours, unless a member of their household and/or support bubble has tested positive or has symptoms. The individual does not need to self-isolate and can return to setting if they have a negative result as long as:

- Everyone they live with who has symptoms tests negative
- Everyone in their support bubble who has symptoms tests negative
- They were not told to self-isolate for 10 days by NHS Test and Trace

## **3. Threshold numbers of Covid-19 cases in schools**

The current thresholds for an outbreak in schools settings are;

### **Early years settings & primary schools:**

- 10% (or more) of a bubble is affected within 14 days – for example, if there are 3 or more confirmed cases of Covid-19 in a bubble of 30 people
- 10% (or more) of staff are affected within 14 days – for example, if there are 6 or more confirmed cases of Covid-19 in a staff of 60
- 3 (or more) bubbles within your school contain at least one confirmed case
- There have been any admissions to hospital
- Your school is a SEND school

### **Secondary schools & settings:**

- 5 or more students are affected in a single school year within 14 days - i.e. 5 or more confirmed cases
- 10% (or more) of staff are affected within 14 days – for example, if there are 6 or more confirmed cases of Covid-19 in a staff of 60
- 3 (or more) bubbles within your school contain at least one confirmed case each
- There have been any admissions to hospital

- Your school is a SEND school
- Your school is a boarding school

**There is no requirement to contact the LCRC/HPT when reaching the threshold but please do email the LCRC/HPT if you have any specific queries or specific requests of support when reaching the threshold, specifying clearly the question that you have.**

Please contact **PHE LCRC** [lcrc@phe.gov.uk](mailto:lcrc@phe.gov.uk) or 0300 303 0450 by email or phone and complete this [form](#)

### **Reaching and managing a threshold number of cases in your setting**

The criteria for reaching and managing the threshold number are described above.

### **When you reach a threshold number of cases this is a moment to review your infection and prevention control measures**

We recognise that not all transmission can be prevented in school, and the enormous efforts schools have put into reducing transmission, but reaching the threshold is a moment for your review. When you reach a threshold number of cases this is a moment to take stock of the infection control measures you have put in place and to review your prevention measures.

These include:

- Continue to identify close contacts and advise them to isolate for the required duration.
- Look over the general infection control measures and see whether there are any additional measures that may work in the setting.
- Consider whether there are any areas where the infection has been passed on and how to prevent this in future. For instance, if you think that transmission has happened between students in the lunch queue, then what can you do to improve distancing, or if between staff, consider whether you can reduce contact in the staff room (if you are using one).
- Discuss any operational issues with the Local Authority.

## Infection control review suggestions

Many of the new cases linked to your setting will have acquired their infection in the wider community including students/staff mixing in friendship groups outside school. Please continue to encourage the school community to abide by all necessary restrictions.

Some transmission may inevitably be occurring in education settings and we would encourage you at this point, to review all your control measures:

- Review your social distancing measures
- To review your cleaning regimes and ensure they continue to be in line with national guidance
- Attempt to minimise mixing between groups of children, within larger bubbles, if possible
- To remind staff and children to wash their hand frequently
- Remind staff members to minimise mixing with other staff in communal areas
- To remind students about maintaining social distancing outside the classroom
- Ensure students continue to remain at their desks in class
- Remind (secondary age) students and staff to cover their face in enclosed spaces, especially where social distancing may be difficult and where they come into contact with people, they don't usually meet

## Testing for Covid-19

Two types of test are currently being used to detect if someone has Covid-19: Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests and Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests – also known as Lateral Flow Tests.

PCR tests detect the RNA (ribonucleic acid, the genetic material) of a virus. PCR tests are the most reliable Covid-19 tests. It takes some time to get the results because they require processing in a laboratory. LFD tests detect proteins in the coronavirus and work in a similar way to a pregnancy test. They are simple and quick to use. LFD tests are not as accurate as PCR tests and are mainly used in people who do NOT have symptoms of Covid-19.

From the 27th of January 2021, the requirement for a confirmatory PCR test following a positive LFD result, has been temporarily suspended for those who do not report their own test results. This temporary suspension applies to all onsite testing in secondary schools and colleges as well as at community LFD centres.

**Those that self test, such as the primary and nursery workforce, will still be required to undertake a confirmatory PCR test.**

Under the new system, a positive LFD result at a testing centre or school/college will trigger the legal duty to self-isolate, eligibility for support payments and contact tracing. The reason for this change is that whilst the prevalence rates are high, the performance of the LFD and PCR test are similar in terms of detecting those who are infections (as opposed to those with detectable virus). Therefore, it is expected that the confirmatory PCR test will be reintroduced following a positive LFD result as prevalence falls.

Further information on testing is available in the [Rapid testing in schools Q+A](#)

### **Mass asymptomatic Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing in Secondary schools**

All secondary schools have received test kits to start the process of lateral flow testing. Lateral flow testing has commenced in some schools in Hackney and aims to train staff in the setting to deliver the tests longer term for students and staff. Staff and students in the school will be given a letter to explain rapid testing, how often it will be offered and what it involves. Students under 16 must have written consent from their parents or guardian before participating. Staff should follow the full guidance for setting up testing outlined in the [Hackney Education Step by Step guide](#).

The lateral flow devices (LFDs) are simple to use (young people aged 11 years and over can swab themselves, with a trained person supervising them). The lateral flow test is an antigen test taken with a throat and nose swab. Test swabs take about five minutes to administer. Processing is done on site and takes about 20-30 mins. Lateral Flow or rapid testing is used to identify people who are asymptomatic who are at high risk of spreading the virus without being aware they are doing it. Up to a third of people with Covid-19 infection can be asymptomatic but may still spread infection.



The aim of the rapid testing programme is to get as many pupils, students and staff tested as soon as possible to break the chain of transmission. The rapid testing programme aims to assess the degree to which asymptomatic testing via LFDs helps to identify positive cases in schools early on, thus reducing the risk of outbreaks. Regular rapid testing enables schools to operate effectively during the pandemic and aims to reduce disruption for those who test negative.

**Please note that LFD tests cannot be used at home for secondary staff or students**

### **Testing regime**

LFD testing will be offered to staff twice per week, spaced 3 to 5 days apart and to students upon their return to school / FE college (2 tests spaced 3-5 days apart). Repeating the test a number of days later may pick up on false negative results as the viral load becomes higher. This will help identify those who are carrying the virus without displaying symptoms, reducing the risk of transmission.

As a result of the emergence of a new more transmissible variant of Covid-19, the daily testing of close contacts of a positive LFD case also known as serial testing, is currently paused. Continuation of this process is pending a national evaluation to investigate if this procedure is an effective alternative to self isolation.

### **Mass asymptomatic LFD home testing for primary school and maintained nursery workforce**

Staff need to carry out twice weekly testing at home 3-4 days apart before they come into the workplace in the morning. Further information for primary schools and maintained nurseries can be found in the [Primary Schools Document Sharing Platform](#)

Staff who test positive should:

- Begin self-isolation at home;
- Order a PCR test; and
- Inform the school/ nursery immediately

School / nursery will identify close contacts of the case in the school setting (excluding household and social contacts outside of school) following a positive LFD case. Those

contacts of confirmed positive cases will be required to self-isolate in accordance with national guidance.

This asymptomatic testing programme does not replace current guidance for those with symptoms or those identified as a close contact of a positive case. Anyone with symptoms, whether they are involved in this programme or not, should book a free NHS test [Covid-19 testing](#) and follow government self-isolation guidance until the results of their test are known.

Testing is a tool to be used alongside existing infection prevention control measures. Testing does not replace basic preventative measures such as regular handwashing, PPE and social distancing.

### Early Years Settings

There is no currently no mass testing programme for early years settings. Staff in early years settings are encouraged to access [rapid testing](#) sites in Hackney.

## 4. Further information and National Guidance:

- [Guidance for schools on mass rapid testing](#)
- [Covid-19 contain framework: a guide for local decision-makers \(appendix 3\)](#)
- [Back to school guidance from the Mayor of London](#)
- [Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care](#)
- [Face coverings in education settings](#)
- [Coronavirus \(Covid-19\): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#)
- [What to do if a pupil is displaying symptoms of Covid-19](#)
- [Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#)

- [Covid-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](#)
- [Coronavirus: Education and Childcare](#)
- [Guidance for full opening: special schools and other specialist settings](#)
- [Actions for Early Years & Childcare Providers During the Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) outbreak](#)
- [Test & Trace: How it Works](#)
- [Coronavirus: Getting Tested](#)
- [Covid-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance](#)
- [Guidance for contacts of people with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(Covid-19\) infection who do not live with the person](#)
- [Coronavirus \(Covid-19\): home test kits for schools and FE providers](#)
- [Public Health England Education Action Cards](#)
- [Stay at home guidance](#)
- [Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed Covid-19 who do not live with the person](#)

## Useful contacts: National, Hackney & City

### National

**Public Health England London Coronavirus Response Cell (PHE LCRC) (the local Health Protection Team)**

[LCRC@phe.gov.uk](mailto:LCRC@phe.gov.uk) or [phe.lcrc@nhs.net](mailto:phe.lcrc@nhs.net)

0300 303 0450 (open 9am to 8pm daily)

### Department for Education

[DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk](mailto:DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk) or 080 0046 8687 (Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm; Saturdays & Sundays 10am to 4pm)

## Hackney

### Public Health enquiries and support

[testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk)

### Education Covid-19 related enquiries

[HLTcorona-support@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:HLTcorona-support@hackney.gov.uk)

### Primary, Secondary & Special School

Please contact your School Improvement Partner

### Children Centres

Gemma Vare, Senior Quality Improvement Partner: [Gemma.vare@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:Gemma.vare@hackney.gov.uk)  
020-8820-7243 / 07932-011893

### EY registered Settings

Hazel Stanciu, Welfare Standards Officer: [hazel.stanciu@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:hazel.stanciu@hackney.gov.uk)  
020-8820-7006 / 07789-944799

Liz Corr: [Liz.corr@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:Liz.corr@hackney.gov.uk) 020-8820-7189

### Childminders

Pippa Williams, Childminding Team Manager: [Pippa.williams@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:Pippa.williams@hackney.gov.uk)  
020-8820-7632 / 07717-581934

### Council Out of Hours Contact (emergencies only)

020 8356 2710 or 020 8356 2710

## City of London

### Public Health enquiries enquiries and support

[testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk)

### Education & Early Years Service

9am to 5pm Monday to Friday: [alexandra.vastano@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:alexandra.vastano@cityoflondon.gov.uk)



**Council Out of Hours Contact (emergency only)**

020 8356 2710