

# COVID-19 outbreak management planning for education and childcare settings

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VERSION 2.4

Calderdale Public Health  
August 2021

This guidance is intended to support all providers of education and childcare with contingency planning in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19 in the setting.

The guidance is based on Current [Department for Education guidance \(here\)](#) which came into place in August 2021. It applies to childcare settings and out of school clubs operating in the Summer holidays and schools and colleges on their return in September.

It consists of some frequently asked questions and a template outbreak management plan, which each setting should populate to demonstrate they have management processes in place. Some of the template has been pre-populated to support settings.

Public Health will update this guidance based on feedback from users and any changes to national guidance that follow over the coming weeks and months.

If you have any suggested improvements or questions that aren't answered please do let us know by emailing [naomi.marquis@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:naomi.marquis@calderdale.gov.uk)

# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. Routine Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing

### 1.1 Should staff and students be tested on their return for the new term?

Students in secondary schools and colleges should be tested twice on site with Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs) when they return for the new term. The tests should be 3-5 days apart.

Those who test positive should isolate and book a confirmatory PCR test and continue to isolate if the result is positive.

### 1.2 Can we arrange testing for the start of term through the local testing programme?

As the national testing and reporting programme is now well established, please use test kits supplied by DfE. Check the delivery schedule on the [primary](#) and [secondary](#) school document sharing platforms, and contact the DfE COVID-19 helpline on 0800 046 8687 for advice.

Test results must be reported into the national portal. Further information is available on the [primary](#) and [secondary](#) school document sharing platforms.

### 1.3 What will happen if multiple staff members or students test positive at the start of term?

Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 on an LFD test should stay at home and seek a PCR test. There is no requirement for contact tracing to take place in the setting.

DfE guidance sets out escalation criteria for outbreaks (see Q 3.2 below). As extra testing at the beginning of term in Secondary and Post 16 settings will identify large numbers of cases, DfE guidance is that escalation measures should not be enacted in the first 4 weeks of term in these settings, even if outbreak thresholds are met.

### 1.4 Do I need to obtain consent for student testing?

Yes, you can use the LFD consent templates that you used for the Spring return to school.

### 1.5 Should staff and students take routine COVID-19 tests?

Staff and students in secondary schools and colleges, and staff in primary schools, should test themselves using LFD twice a week at home until the end of September. LFD test kits can be obtained from pharmacies, test sites and some community venues, see [here](#).

All early years and wraparound childcare staff should also continue to test twice weekly as they have done throughout the summer.

Twice weekly testing will be reviewed at the end of September to decide if it should continue

Anyone who tests positive on an LFD test should isolate and book a confirmatory PCR test. They should continue to isolate if the result is positive.

## 2. Responding to a case of COVID-19 in your setting

2.1 Should I contact Public Health if I am made aware of a COVID-19 case linked to our setting?

There is no need to notify Public Health about individual cases unless the DfE outbreak thresholds have been reached (see 3.2).

2.2 Should we still identify contacts of cases in our setting?

DfE now states that education and early years settings **do not** undertake contact tracing.

In Calderdale all contact tracing is undertaken by our local contact tracers, which gives an opportunity to identify possible contacts in a more timely way. However, contacts from an education or childcare setting will only be traced by Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent/carer **specifically identifies** an individual as being a close contact. This is likely to result in people who have been exposed to the virus not being identified and advised to isolate or take other precautions.

Where a case identifies that they were in an education or childcare setting when they were infectious, NHS Test and Trace may contact the setting in exceptional circumstances, to identify close contacts. For example, when there are indications that there might be an outbreak.

2.3 Can we still instruct contacts of a case to self-isolate?

Staff who are fully vaccinated (those who received their final dose of an UK approved vaccine at least 14 days prior to contact with a positive case) are not required to self-isolate.

Children and young people those under the age of 18 years and 6 months are not required to self-isolate.

You cannot instruct fully vaccinated adults or children and young people to self-isolate.

## 2.4 Can we take any action in response to a case in our setting?

It remains important that people who may have been exposed to the virus are made aware of this so that they can take precautions, such as staying away from clinically vulnerable friends and family members.

If you are an employer, you have responsibilities for the health and safety of your staff and others in your setting. Knowing about contacts in your setting will help you understand specific risks and decide on mitigating actions in line with your risk assessment.

This may be particularly important depending on the circumstances of your setting and local community, for example where case rates are high, and vaccination and testing rates are low, and where families live in larger multigenerational households.

Settings may wish to take proactive action in the event of a positive case, depending on their own individual circumstances. A template letter is attached which you may choose to send to parents/carers of children who you feel meet the contact definition.

In line with your risk assessment, you may also choose to temporarily move clinically extremely vulnerable staff members or those in their third trimester of pregnancy away from staff or children who may meet the contact definition within the setting, for example by ensuring that they can maintain a 2-metre distance from others within the classroom. If you identify risks to clinically extremely vulnerable staff members that cannot otherwise be mitigated, you may choose to redeploy them or ask them to work from home.

Your risk assessment should also consider any risks to clinically extremely vulnerable children in your setting or children that live in households with clinically extremely vulnerable people.

## 2.5 What can contacts of positive cases do to prevent the virus spreading?

Vaccination reduces, but does not eliminate, the risk of acquiring and transmitting infection.

While the person who tested positive for COVID-19 is self-isolating, we recommend that the 'contact' who would previously have self-isolated:

1. limits close contact with other people outside their household, especially in enclosed spaces
2. wears a face covering in enclosed spaces and where they are unable to maintain social distancing
3. limits contact with anyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable
4. takes part in regular LFD testing

If the contact lives or works with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, it is important to stay away from them as much as possible.

### 3. Responding to an outbreak of COVID-19 in your setting

#### 3.1 What is an outbreak?

An outbreak is defined as two or more linked cases in a setting. That means that it is likely someone in the setting has caught COVID-19 from someone else in the setting. When there are high rates of COVID-19 in the community, you may see a number of cases in the setting, without evidence that transmission has occurred within the setting. This is known as a cluster.

When there is an outbreak, it may be necessary to take extra steps to prevent the virus spreading further to prevent harm to the public's health.

#### 3.2 What should we do if we think we have an outbreak?

Current [Department for Education guidance](#) states that extra action should only be considered when either of the below thresholds is met:

- 5 children, pupils, students or staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period
- or
- 10% of children, pupils, students or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period

For special schools, residential settings, and settings that operate with 20 or fewer children, pupils, students and staff at any one time, extra action should only be taken when 2 children, pupils, students and staff, who are likely to have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period

If the number of cases in your setting meets either of the above thresholds, you **must** seek Public Health advice. You can contact the Calderdale Public Health team on 07714 922670.

DfE guidance sets out escalation criteria for outbreaks (see Q 3.2 below). As extra testing at the beginning of term in Secondary and Post 16 settings, will identify large numbers of cases, DfE guidance is that escalation measures should not be enacted in the first 4 weeks of term in these settings, even if outbreak thresholds are met.

#### 3.3 What will happen if we have an outbreak?

If you have an outbreak, Public Health will work with you to discuss the steps that can be taken to reduce COVID-19 spreading further, so that we can protect people from harm. Limiting the impact on staff and children will remain at the forefront of decision making. Your outbreak management plan (see template below) will help to inform decisions.

### 3.4 When might I be contacted to take action?

You may be contacted if data from positive test results and contact tracing suggests you may have an outbreak or appear to have a higher than usual number of cases in the setting and you haven't already contacted us to discuss. You may be contacted either by Calderdale Public Health team or, on occasion, by the UK Health Security Agency (previously Public Health England).

### 3.5 Will I have to implement all the control measures if we have an outbreak?

Public Health will work with you to decide together what the best measures are for you, based on the particular circumstances of the outbreak and of your setting.

Examples of actions that might be taken if a threshold is reached and there is an outbreak include:

- Reinforce hygiene measures
- Consider whether any activities could take place outdoors, including exercise, assemblies, or classes
- Increase ventilation indoors
- Enhanced cleaning focussing on touch points and any shared equipment
- Strengthened communications to encourage pupils / students to undertake twice weekly rapid asymptomatic home testing and reporting
- Reinstating on-site rapid LFD testing in secondary and post-16 settings for a two-week period to encourage uptake of twice weekly testing
- Increase the frequency of LFD testing
- Temporarily reinstating face coverings for pupils/students, staff and visitors in indoor and/or communal spaces in secondary and post-16 settings, and for staff in primary, early years, out-of-school, and specialist settings. DfE guidance is that this should be for two weeks in the first instance, and reviewed regularly
- **As a last resort where all other risk mitigations have not broken chains of in-school transmission**, introducing short-term attendance restrictions may be advised, such as sending home a class or year group

### 3.6 If we are advised to introduce attendance restrictions, how should we code absences?

DfE have not yet issued guidance for coding absence where Public Health advise restricting attendance

Do we have to take action in the event of an outbreak, or is this advisory?

When one of the above thresholds is reached, you **must** seek Public Health advice. The local Public Health team will work with you to agree what steps should be taken to prevent further spread.

### 3. Risk Assessments and Outbreak management plans

#### 4.1 Do we need to update the risk assessment for the setting?

It is important that your risk assessment is updated to reflect the fact that there may be staff and children in the setting who have been exposed to COVID-19 who would previously have been instructed to self-isolate. The risk assessment will need to set out how the risk of transmission to vulnerable staff and students and their household members will be mitigated. Vulnerable people include those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV), pregnant women, and people with certain medical conditions that mean that they are unable to have the vaccine, or that the vaccine will not be as effective.

#### 4.2 Can I just switch back to the setting's previous risk assessment if I get an outbreak?

Depending on the control measures agreed with public health, your previous risk assessment might be helpful, but it is likely that only some of the control measures you had in place previously would be recommended rather than a return to all measures.

#### 4.3 What should the outbreak management plan for my setting cover?

The [DfE contingency framework](#) requires all education and childcare settings to contingency or outbreak management plans. Your plan should cover:

- roles and responsibilities
- when and how to seek public health advice
- details on the control measures you might put in place

The plan should include:

- actions you would take to put it in place quickly
- how you would ensure every child, pupil or student receives the quantity and quality of education and support to which they are normally entitled
- how you would communicate changes to children, pupils, students, parents, carers and staff.

A template plan is available at the end of this document

# Appendix 1: Letter to parents/carers in the event of a positive case

Confirmed COVID-19 case linked to (Name of setting)

Dear parent,

We have been made aware that there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 in our setting. The person was last in the setting whilst infectious on (Date).

DfE guidance no longer allows for us to support with contact tracing, but we feel that your child may have been exposed to the virus. We would therefore like to remind you of the things you can do to keep your family and others as safe as possible for 10 days from (Date).

## **If you have been in contact with someone with COVID-19**

- Limit close contact with other people outside the household, especially in enclosed spaces
- Limit contact with anyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable
- Wear a face covering in enclosed spaces and where you are unable to maintain social distancing if you are 11 or over
- Take part in regular LFD testing if aged 11 or over
- Stay away from people who are clinically vulnerable as much as possible
- Remember that vaccination reduces, but does not eliminate, the risk of acquiring and transmitting infection.

## **If anyone in your household develops COVID-19 symptoms**

- The three main symptoms of COVID-19 are:
  - New continuous cough and/or
  - High temperature and/or
  - Loss of or change in normal sense of taste or smell
- Anyone with any of these symptoms should stay at home and arrange a PCR test.
- If the test result is positive, the person must self-isolate for 10 days.

## **Support to self-isolate**

If anyone in your household tests positive for COVID-19, or is told to isolate as a contact of a case, support is available.

Support with practical tasks like shopping and collecting medications is available if you are unable to leave the house and don't have any family or friends that can help. For more information visit <https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/coronavirus/help/advice> or ring **01422 392890** if you don't have access to the internet.

You may be eligible for financial assistance of £500 if you are unable to go to work because you are isolating and will lose income as a result. For more information visit <https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/coronavirus-covid-19/help-people-and-communities/test-and-trace-support-payment> or ring **01422 288003** if you don't have access to the internet.

### **Further Information**

Further information is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Yours sincerely,

## Appendix 2: Template outbreak management plan

Outbreak Management Plan: **INSERT SETTING NAME HERE**

Public Health Advice	Setting Action <b>[SETTING TO COMPLETE]</b>	Mitigations to minimise impact on education <b>[SETTING TO COMPLETE]</b>	Setting Lead & Deputy <b>[SETTING TO COMPLETE]</b>
Reinforce hand and respiratory hygiene measures			
Consider whether any activities could take place outdoors, including exercise, assemblies, or classes			
Increase ventilation indoors			
Cease use of staffrooms			
Enhanced cleaning focussing on touch points and any shared equipment			
Strengthened communications to encourage staff/students to undertake twice weekly LFD testing			
Encourage staff to undertake more frequent LFD testing			
Reinstate on-site rapid LFD testing for students in secondary and post-16			
Reintroduction of 'bubbles' and limit mixing			

<b>Reintroduction of face coverings in communal areas (for staff and students in secondary / post 16, and staff in primary)</b>			
<b>Reintroduction of face coverings in classrooms (secondary / post 16 only)</b>			
<b>Cessation of educational residential visits</b>			
<b>Cessation of educational day visits</b>			
<b>Cessation of open days and/or transition or taster days</b>			
<b>Close to visitors and non-essential external services</b>			
<b>No parental attendance on site</b>			
<b>No live performances on site</b>			
<b>Mass PCR testing of pupils/students on site</b>			
<b>Reintroduction of shielding for clinically extremely vulnerable children and staff</b>			
<b>Closure of all setting-based wrap around care</b>			
<b>Closure of a particular room, class, or year group</b>			
<b>Closure of school to all but key worker and vulnerable children</b>			
<b>Closure of entire school</b>			