

19th April 2022

COVID-19 & schools

Dear parents/carers

UPDATE ON END OF FREE CORONAVIRUS TESTING AND NEW GUIDANCE

As of 1st April, the Government no longer provides free Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing for the general public in England. This includes access to tests for schools, nurseries and special schools. We are writing to let you know what the new guidance means for you and your children, in relation to infection control in schools and early years settings.

Minimising the spread of COVID-19

Schools and settings will continue with measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases – including good ventilation and using outdoor spaces; making sure people wash their hands regularly, use tissues and throw them away properly.

Please remind your children to cough into a tissue or their elbow, cover their mouth and nose with a tissue, (not hands) when they cough or sneeze, and to put used tissues in the bin immediately. Ask them to wash their hands with soap and water often, especially before eating, and to use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.

Should your child attend school?

For children and young people aged 18 and under COVID-19 is usually a mild illness and most get better in a few days. Although testing is no longer available, children and young people should stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have symptoms of COVID-19 (full list below*) **and**:

- have a high temperature or
- do not feel well enough to go to school, college or childcare, or do their normal activities.

They can go back to school, college or childcare when they no longer have a high temperature and they are well enough to attend.

Children with diarrhoea and/or vomiting should stay away from school until two days (48 hours) after they last vomited or had diarrhoea, **even if they do not have a high temperature**.

From 1st April, anyone over the age of 18 years with a positive COVID-19 test result should stay at home and avoid contact with other people for **five** days, which is when they are most infectious.

If a child or young person aged 18 or under tests positive for COVID-19, they should stay at home and avoid contact with other people for **three** days. This starts from the day after they did the test.

Children and young people tend to be infectious to others for less time than adults. If they're well and do not have a temperature after 3 days, there's a much lower risk that they'll pass on COVID-19 to others. Anyone with mild symptoms such as a runny nose or a mild cough may attend, as long as they are well enough to do so and do not have a high temperature.

***Symptoms of COVID-19 can include:**

- a high temperature or shivering (chills) – a high temperature means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
- shortness of breath
- feeling tired or exhausted
- an aching body
- a headache
- a sore throat
- a blocked or runny nose
- loss of appetite
- diarrhoea
- feeling sick or being sick

Good school attendance is vital for learning but it is also important that anyone who is unwell or likely to be infections stays at home. You can find NHS information about what to do if your child has COVID-19 symptoms [here](#) and more about when children should attend school or stay at home due to other illnesses [here](#).

If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school or nursery on the first day. Let them know that your child won't be in and give them the reason.

Vaccination

12–15 year olds

From 1st April the in-school COVID vaccination programme will come to an end but 12 to 15 year olds will still be able to get the vaccine at a vaccination centre, pharmacy or walk-in centre. For a full list of clinics in Lewisham, please see [here](#).

5–11 year olds

From April, 5-11 year olds who are well will also be offered the COVID-19 vaccine in vaccination centres, pharmacies, GPs and walk-in centres. Parents of 5-11 year olds will receive a letter from the NHS with further information. You can read more about the vaccine and book an appointment [here](#).

We would like to thank you again for your ongoing efforts in reducing COVID-19 infections and protecting our schools, nurseries and the wider community.

Yours sincerely,



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