

# Responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID19 – Schools and Colleges

Updated 16<sup>th</sup> September

## Overview:

Child, young person or staff member develops symptoms. They self-isolate immediately.



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graph TD; A[Child, young person or staff member develops symptoms. They self-isolate immediately.] --> B[Child, young person or staff member accesses a test.]; B --> C["If positive: Contact the DFE Helpline or Essex Contact Tracing Team to report case and identify who needs to self-isolate as a result."]; C --> D["In order to assist with identifying close contacts schools and colleges will need to know which children or young people:"]; D --> E["If test result is negative the child, young person or staff member can return to school/college once feeling well (as usual practice)."]
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Child, young person or staff member accesses a test.

If positive: **Contact the DFE Helpline or Essex Contact Tracing Team to report case and** identify who needs to self-isolate as a result.

In order to assist with identifying close contacts schools and colleges will need to know which children or young people:

- use home to school/college transport
- attend before or after school clubs and activities
- are in which bubbles/ groups within school or college setting

If test result is negative the child, young person or staff member can return to school/college once feeling well (as usual practice).

Sources: [Full Opening Guidance](#)  
[safe working in education](#)  
[implementing the protective measures in education](#)  
Public Health advice  
[testing and tracing for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

<p><b>If symptoms develop during the school/college day:</b></p>	<p>If a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms of the coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate immediately, only leaving the house to access a test.</p> <p>If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, with appropriate adult supervision if required depending on the age of the child. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.</p> <p>If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.</p> <p>PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if direct personal care is needed and a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).</p>
<p><b>If a child/staff member begins displaying symptoms outside of school/college.</b></p>	<p>The individual must not come to school/college. You should encourage them to seek a test and request that they inform you of the outcome of their test.</p> <p>If the individual arrives at school/ college, they should be sent home immediately.</p>
<p><b>How to Access a Test</b></p>	<p>Tests for staff can be booked through the <a href="#">employer portal</a>.</p> <p>Individuals can be booked online through the NHS <a href="#">testing and tracing for coronavirus website</a>, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet.</p> <p>Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have priority access to testing.</p>
<p><b>Home Testing Kits</b></p>	<p>From the autumn term, all schools will be provided with 10 testing kits that can be given directly to parents/carers collecting a child who has developed symptoms at school, or staff who have developed symptoms at school, where you think providing one will significantly increase the likelihood of them getting tested.</p> <p>These kits are not for use by school staff to test children.</p>

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<p><b>Ordering more Test Kits</b></p>	<p>An <a href="#">online portal is now live</a> for schools and further education (FE) providers to order additional test kits if they have run out, or are running out, of their initial 10 kits.</p> <p>You will be able to make a new order for test kits 21 days after you receive a delivery confirmation email telling you that your previous supply of test kits has been sent.</p> <p>Schools and FE providers will receive a unique organisation number (UON) via email from the Department of Health and Social Care which will be needed to place your order. From 17 September, please call the Test and Trace helpdesk on 119 if you have not received your UON or if you have lost your record of it.</p>
<p><b>If a pupil or staff member tests positive – identifying others who need to self-isolate.</b></p>	<p>When an individual tests positive for COVID19 the NHS Test and Trace programme is engaged. For schools and colleges, this means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You should contact the DFE helpline to report the positive case (0800 046 8687)</li> <li>• The advisor will undertake a risk assessment to identify close contacts and inform you of any actions that need to be taken.</li> <li>• You will need to have information readily available, on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Which children and staff are in which <b>bubbles</b> in school/ college</li> <li>○ Which children travel to school on <b>home to school transport</b></li> <li>○ Which children and staff attend <b>before/after school clubs</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• If the child has used home to school transport you may need to liaise with the operator directly to ascertain any additional children using the same transport who also need to self-isolate.</li> <li>• You must send home those staff and pupils identified as having been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person (during the infections period)</li> <li>• You are not expected to know which contacts staff or pupils have had outside of school/ college.</li> </ul>

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	<p>If you cannot get through to advisors via the DfE helpline, the Essex Contact Tracing Team is still available for you to use to identify close contacts and seek advice on next steps. You can contact them on:</p> <p>0300 303 2698  <a href="mailto:provide.escontacttracing@nhs.net">provide.escontacttracing@nhs.net</a>  Mon-Fri: 8am to 8pm  Sat/Sun/BH: 10am to 4pm</p>
<b>Self-isolation following a positive test</b>	<p>If an individual tests positive they must continue to self-isolate for <b>at least 10 days</b> from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school/ college only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal.</p> <p>The 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill.</p> <p>Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the <b>full 14 days</b>.</p> <p><u>'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection'</u></p>
<b>Informing Public Health of positive case/s</b>	<p><u><b>The process for reporting positive cases to Public Health has changed.</b></u></p> <p>Instead of calling your local health protection team when there is a confirmed case in your education setting, you should now call the DfE's helpline and you will then be directed to the dedicated NHS advice team for nurseries, schools and colleges with confirmed cases.</p> <p>The new service can be reached by calling DfE's existing helpline on <b>0800 046 8687</b> and selecting the option for reporting a positive case. The line will be open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, and 10am to 4pm on Saturdays and Sundays.</p>

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	<p>You will be put through to a team of advisors who will inform you what action is needed based on the latest public health advice, and work through a risk assessment to identify close contacts.</p> <p>The advisor will escalate your case to Public Health England's local health protection teams if it is more complex, for example outbreaks where there is more than one confirmed case.</p> <p>We also ask that you continue to inform <a href="mailto:schoolscommunication@essex.gov.uk">schoolscommunication@essex.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Cleaning the area following a case of COVID 19</b>	<p>All surfaces that the symptomatic person has come into contact with must be cleaned and disinfected, including; bathrooms, door handles, telephones, grab-rails in corridors and stairwells.</p> <p>Use disposable cloths or paper roll and disposable mop heads, to clean all hard surfaces, floors, chairs, door handles and sanitary fittings, following one of the options below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a combined detergent disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1,000 parts per million available chlorine</li> <li>• a household detergent followed by disinfection (1000 ppm av.cl.). Follow manufacturer's instructions for dilution, application and contact times for all detergents and disinfectants</li> <li>• if an alternative disinfectant is used within the organisation, this should be checked and ensure that it is effective against enveloped viruses</li> </ul> <p>Areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time, such as corridors, but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids can be cleaned thoroughly as normal.</p> <p>Avoid creating splashes and spray when cleaning.</p> <p>Any cloths and mop heads used must be disposed of and should be put into waste bags as outlined below.</p> <p>The minimum PPE to be worn for cleaning an area where a person with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) is disposable gloves and an apron.</p>

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	Hands should be washed with soap and water for 20 seconds after all PPE has been removed.
<b>Who should access a test?</b>	<p>The symptomatic individual should access a test as soon as possible.</p> <p>The symptoms for testing are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)</li> <li>• new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)</li> <li>• loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you’ve noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal</li> </ul> <p>Contacts of this individual should only access testing if they themselves become symptomatic.</p> <p>If a contact who has been asked to self-isolate, goes on to display symptoms, accesses a test but it is negative – they still cannot return to school/ college until they have completed their 14 days isolation period (this is because they still might go on to become positive during the 14 days).</p>
<b>Accessing testing</b>	<p>Tests for staff can be booked through the <a href="#">employer portal</a>.</p> <p>Individuals can be booked online through the NHS <a href="#">testing and tracing for coronavirus website</a>, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet.</p> <p>Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have priority access to testing.</p>
<b>Accessing testing for children:</b>	<p>Anyone with symptoms can get a coronavirus test, whatever their age. Parents should book a test via the <a href="#">NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website</a>, or order by telephone via 119 for those without access to the internet.</p>
<b>Returning to school/college/ work</b>	<p>Where the original individual tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.</p>

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	<p>Where the child/staff member tests positive – they may return to school/ college after <b>10</b> days from the onset of their symptoms and then return only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal.</p> <p>If someone is symptomatic, tests positive and works with a vulnerable group/individual, who has greater vulnerability than the general population, it is sensible they are excluded for <b>14</b> rather than 10 days.</p>
<b>Disposing of waste</b>	<p>To dispose of waste from people with symptoms of coronavirus, such as disposable cleaning cloths, tissues and PPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• put it in a plastic rubbish bag and tie it</li> <li>• place the plastic bag in a second bin bag and tie it</li> <li>• put it in a suitable and secure place marked for storage for 72 hours</li> </ul> <p>Waste should be stored safely and securely kept away from children. You should not put your waste in communal waste areas until the waste has been stored for at least 72 hours. Storing for 72 hours saves unnecessary waste movements and minimises the risk to waste operatives. This waste does not require a dedicated clinical waste collection in the above circumstances.</p> <p>If, in an emergency, you need to remove the waste before 72 hours, it must be treated as Category B infectious waste. You must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keep it separate from your other waste</li> <li>• arrange for collection by a specialist contractor as hazardous waste</li> </ul> <p>There will be a charge for this service.</p>

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<b>Remote Learning for those self-isolating</b>	<p>Where a pupil is unable to attend school/ college because they, and/or their parents, are complying with clinical or public health advice, schools/ colleges should immediately offer access to remote education.</p> <p>The expectations around remote learning are included in the <u>Remote Education Support Guidance</u>, with more information expected in September.</p>
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## Frequently Asked Questions

<b>What should I do now to prepare for a potential case of COVID19?</b>	<p>Schools/ colleges should have lists of the following, readily available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which children and staff are allocated to which groups on site (i.e. class groups, or ‘bubbles’)</li> <li>• Which children travel to school on home to school transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This information can be found on Infolink and/or will have been shared with you by the Integrated Passenger Transport Unit at ECC</li> <li>○ You will need to ensure it is up to date following any changes from Sept</li> <li>○ If known – which transport operator is used</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Which children and staff attend before/after school clubs and which groups they are in for these clubs</li> <li>• Any close contact that takes places between children and staff in different groups</li> </ul> <p>Schools/ colleges should also consider how they will be able to ‘switch on’ remote learning provision for children who are asked to self-isolate, as quickly as possible. Note that these contingency plans are expected to be in place by end of Sept; see DFE <u>Remote Education Support Guidance</u>.</p>
<b>What is defined as a ‘close contact’?</b>	<p>Close contacts are defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct close contacts - face to face contact, for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)</li> <li>• proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes)</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>travelling in a small vehicle, like a car</li> </ul>
<b>What does the Test and Trace programme mean for schools/colleges?</b>	<p>As part of the national test and trace programme, if cases occur within the school/college community, you should contact the <a href="#">N DFE helpline</a> who will undertake a rapid investigation and advise you on the most appropriate action to take.</p> <p><a href="#">You can also use the Essex Contact Tracing Service.</a></p> <p>In some cases, a larger number of other children/ young people may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, site or year group.</p> <p>It is not expected that closure of the whole site will be necessary where schools/ colleges are following advice around infection control.</p>
<b>Do other staff members need to self-isolate if a staff member tests positive?</b>	<p>No, other staff members outside of those identified through the risk assessment do not need to self-isolate if a teacher or other staff member contracts COVID19.</p> <p>The reason for this is because staff members should be able to implement social distancing when at work. It is appreciated that this will not always be possible with children in the classroom and so the DFE will advise on this.</p>
<b>Who do we need to inform of a positive case?</b>	<p>As soon as a pupil or member of staff has tested positive for COVID-19, please notify the <b>Schools Communication Inbox</b> <a href="mailto:Schoolscommunication@essex.gov.uk">Schoolscommunication@essex.gov.uk</a></p> <p><a href="#">and</a> DFE helpline: 0800 046 8687, which is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, and 10am to 4pm on Saturdays and Sundays.</p>
<b>Should a school/college close to deep clean?</b>	<p>It is not necessary to close the whole site to deep clean as a result of a case of COVID19. It is advised that, if possible, children/staff are moved away from the area in which the symptomatic individual has been in order to clean.</p>
<b>If a group of people are asked to isolate but individuals within that group</b>	<p><a href="#">Those identified through contact tracing</a> must self-isolate for 14 days. This is because it may take a number of days for symptoms to show, in the meantime the individual could return a negative test but then go on to become positive.</p>

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<b>return a negative test, can they return to school/college?</b>	
<b>Should we inform parents of a case of COVID19 in school/college.</b>	<p>Yes, it is advisable to inform the school/college community when there is a positive case. Transparency at this time is important as it allows parents, children and staff to be even more vigilant.</p> <p><a href="#">Schools/colleges must not share the names or details of people with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.</a></p>

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