**Managing an outbreak of Coronavirus**

**System of controls’: prevention**

Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have [coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works#people-who-develop-symptoms-of-coronavirus), or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.

Ensuring that children, staff and other adults do not come into school if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or have tested positive in the last 10 days and ensuring anyone developing those symptoms during the day is sent home, are essential actions to reduce the risk in school and further drive down transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). All schools must follow this process and ensure all staff are aware of it.

**Manging a suspected case of Coronavirus**

If anyone in the school has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19): a high temperature, new and persistent cough or a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), however mild, they should self-isolate for at least 10 days from when their symptoms started; or if they are not experiencing symptoms, but have tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), they should self-isolate for at least 10 days starting from the day the test was taken.

If they have tested positive whilst not experiencing symptoms, but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they should restart the 10-day isolation period from the day they develop symptoms.

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. 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. If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should be taken to a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

PPE must be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs). More information on PPE use can be found in the [Safe working in education, childcare and children’s social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe) guidance.

As is usual practice, in an emergency, call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Anyone with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms should not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any children who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate. However, they must self-isolate and arrange for a test if they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test), if the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive (see below) or they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

Everyone must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser after any contact with someone who is unwell. The area around the person with symptoms must be cleaned with normal household disinfectant after they have left to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. See the [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings outside the home](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings) guidance.

PHE is clear that routinely taking the temperature of children is not recommended as this is an unreliable method for identifying coronavirus (COVID-19).

**Engaging with the NHS Test and Trace process**

Schools must ensure they understand the NHS Test and Trace process and how to contact their local [PHE health protection team](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings). Schools must ensure that staff members and parents/carers understand that they will need to be ready and willing to:

* [book a test](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested) if they are displaying symptoms. Staff and children must not come into the setting if they have symptoms and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them in the school. All children can be tested, including children under 5, but children under 11 will need to be helped by their parents or carers if using a home testing kit
* provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
* [self-isolate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection) if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the NHS website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to internet. Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have [priority access to testing](https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-essential-workers).

The government will ensure that it is as easy as possible to get a test through a wide range of routes that are locally accessible, fast and convenient. Schools should ask parents, carers and staff to inform them immediately of the results of the test:

* if someone tests negative, and they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can also stop self-isolating
* if someone tests positive, they should follow [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance) and should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell or taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The at least 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

#### Managing confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the school

Schools must take swift action when they become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). Schools should contact the local health protection team. This team will also contact schools directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended the school – as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

The local health protection team will work with schools to carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate.

The local health protection team will work with schools in this situation to guide them through the actions they need to take. Based on the advice from the local health protection team, schools should send home those people who have 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 when they were infectious. Close contact means:

* direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin to skin)
* proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1-2m for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
* travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

The local health protection team will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home. To support them in doing so, we recommend settings keep a record of:

* children and staff in specific groups/rooms (where applicable)
* close contact that takes places between children and staff in different groups/rooms

This should be a proportionate recording process. Schools do not need to ask staff to keep definitive records in a way that is overly burdensome.

A template letter will be provided on the advice of the local health protection team, to send to parents, carers and staff if needed. Schools must not share the names or details of people with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.

Household members of those who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period, they should follow [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance). They should get a test, and:

* if the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period. This is because they could still develop the coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days
* if the test result is positive, they should inform their school immediately, and should isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 14-day isolation period). Their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance)
* schools should not request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation

Further guidance is available on [Testing and tracing for coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/).

**Containing any outbreak by following local health protection team advice**

If schools have two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, schools may have an outbreak, and must contact their local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other children self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole site or a group. If settings are implementing the controls from this list, addressing the risks they have identified and therefore reducing transmission risks, whole school closure based on cases within the school will not generally be necessary, and should not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.