**Education Settings**

**COVID-19 update from Cumbria County Council’s Public Health Team**

|  |
| --- |
| **PLEASE CONTINUE TO REPORT POSITIVE CASES OF COVID-19 TO THE EDUCATION IPC TEAM AT CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL VIA THE ONLINE NOTIFICATION FORM OR SECURELY VIA EMAIL TO** **educationIPC@cumbria.gov.uk****SUPPORT WITH QUERIES, INCIDENTS AND OUTBREAKS CONTINUEs TO BE AVAILABLE FROM THE EDUCATION IPC TEAM. PLEASE EMAIL IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES:** **educationIPC@cumbria.gov.uk**Current outbreak threshold levels still apply and the threshold framework advice is currently being updated. |

1. **Prime Minister’s announcement on the Living with COVID-19 plan**

On Monday 21 February the Prime Minister set out the next phase of the government’s COVID-19 response [‘Living with COVID-19’](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19?utm_source=21%20February%202022%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19).

Further information on what this means for education and childcare settings and children’s social care services is below.

1. **Changes to twice-weekly LFD testing from 21 February**

From Monday 21 February, the Government removed the guidance for staff and students in most education and childcare settings to undertake twice-weekly asymptomatic testing. These settings may however still be advised by the Local Authority Public Health Team to carry out LFD testing for a limited time period in the event of an outbreak (if this happens, see section 2.1 below for details of how to order tests).

**PLEASE NOTE, IF A SETTING ORDERS LFD KITS IN AN OUTBREAK SITUATION, IT COULD TAKE UP TO 3 DAYS FOR DELIVERY. THEREFORE, IF YOU CURRENTLY HAVE SPARE TEST KITS, YOU MAY WANT TO KEEP SOME IN STOCK, SO A SUPPLY IS READILY AVAILABLE IF REQUIRED.**

Staff and students in SEND settings, alternative provision settings, and SEND units within mainstream settings or equivalent in further education colleges are advised to continue twice-weekly testing. Staff in residential units in children’s social care (open and secure children’s homes) and children of secondary age and above in open children’s homes are also advised to continue twice-weekly testing. Children and young people arriving in secure children’s homes should test on arrival. Some changes are being made to the ordering process and settings should have been contacted about this directly.

* 1. **How will mainstream settings place orders from 22 February onwards?**

From 22 February, the online ordering solution and delivery processes will be changing to reflect the changes to regular asymptomatic testing. All education settings (nurseries, primary schools, secondary schools, FE colleges, ITPs and ACLPs) will continue to be able to order self-test kits for groups of staff, pupils and students **in the event of an outbreak in their setting**.

Education settings will be able to place an order and receive a delivery within 3 working days. An updated How to Guide for ordering test kits is available on the Testing in Education Settings document sharing platform.

Mainstream settings should use the following channels to access test kits in the event of an outbreak:

* **Use up existing supplies of self test kits prior to placing an order** - If your setting is asked to undertake testing in the event of an outbreak, you should ask staff, pupils / students to use up any supplies of test kits they have at home first or issue them with a new box of test kits from your existing stock. You should check expiry dates before supplying these test kits.
* **Access test kits via the universal testing offer** - Staff may prefer to access test kits from their local pharmacy or by ordering on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests), as this may be quicker and easier for them.
* **Place an order on the** [**online ordering solution**](https://request-testing.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/) **-** If you have run out of stock you will be able to place an order through the online ordering system. You will be asked to enter the total number of staff, pupils/ students in your setting but you will receive a reduced proportion of test kits to cover the outbreak in your setting. Orders placed **by 3pm each day** will be processed and delivered within 3 working days. You will receive a delivery confirmation email, confirming the expected delivery date of your order.
* **Call 119 for further advice and support** - If you need additional test kits but you are blocked from placing an order or you need more test kits than you can order through the online ordering system, you should contact NHS Test and Trace (UKHSA) on 119.

For more information, visit the [frequently asked questions](https://smex-ctp.trendmicro.com:443/wis/clicktime/v1/query?url=https%3a%2f%2feur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com%2f%3furl%3dhttps%253A%252F%252Fdrive.google.com%252Ffile%252Fd%252F1VDs5obas6OOzqc2KZ4gtUyOcgX9J3mhJ%252Fview%26data%3d04%257C01%257CFatima.Rumash%2540phe.gov.uk%257C4d50c2cb034c41a0a0ee08d9f5f2a8fa%257Cee4e14994a354b2ead475f3cf9de8666%257C0%257C0%257C637811244824104388%257CUnknown%257CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%253D%257C3000%26sdata%3d8R%252FWoesNRjTiEtYLtl0H8WfY9MATCg19rqjI2iY4Tos%253D%26reserved%3d0&umid=f29d446e-d901-4d24-877f-b65236fac2ea&auth=3c31a3188e85a6f72e07941216164a5d0d44dc4a-be733b03a39f2530ae13384ca51ecfcdebdf68c1) on the document sharing platform.

1. **Changes to self-isolation, daily testing of close contacts and local enhanced guidance**

From today (Thursday 24 February), the Government will remove the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test.

Adults and children who develop one or more of the 3 main symptoms of COVID-19 will still be advised to get a PCR test and stay at home until the result is known.

Adults and children who test positive will continue to be advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least 5 full days, and then continue to follow the guidance until they have received 2 negative test results on consecutive days.

**On health and safety grounds, settings should encourage staff and pupils to follow this advice.** The Public Health team are currently drafting letter templates for settings to use to help share advice with staff, pupils, students and families.

In addition, the Government will:

* No longer ask fully vaccinated close contacts and those aged under 18 to test daily for 7 days, and remove the legal requirement for close contacts who are not fully vaccinated to self-isolate.
* End self-isolation support payments, national funding for practical support and the medicine delivery service will no longer be available.
* Remove the COVID-19 provisions within the Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance regulations.
* End routine contact tracing. Contacts will no longer be required to self-isolate or advised to take daily tests. Staff, children and young people should attend their education settings as usual. This includes staff who have been in close contact within their household, unless they are able to work from home.
* End the legal obligation for individuals to tell their employers when they are required to self-isolate.

**Please note, national guidance has been updated today. ‘Stay at home’ guidance and guidance for ‘close contacts of positive cases’ have been replaced by** [**Guidance: COVID-19: people with COVID-19 and their contacts**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-people-with-covid-19-and-their-contacts/covid-19-people-with-covid-19-and-their-contacts)**.**

In light of these changes, we are also stepping down the local enhanced guidance (because it no longer complements national guidance around self-isolation and testing in close contacts). This means as of today (Thursday 24 February):

* There will no longer be local enhanced guidance giving Early Years settings the option to ask that children who are household close contacts of a positive case stay at home for 5 days.
* There will no longer be local enhanced guidance giving primary schools the option to ask that children who are household close contacts of a positive case stay at home for 5 days and then PCR test on day 5.
1. **Update for schools on recording attendance**

The position on recording school attendance in the register has not changed. Where a pupil is following advice to self-isolate prior to a confirmed case of COVID-19 they should be recorded as code X (not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus). Where a pupil has a confirmed case of COVID-19 they should be recorded as code I (illness).

1. **Further changes coming into effect from 1 April**

From Friday 1 April, the Government will:

* Update guidance setting out the ongoing steps that people with COVID-19 should take to minimise contact with other people. This will align with the changes to testing and is likely to describe action that people should take when they experience specific symptoms of illness.
* No longer provide free to order universal symptomatic and asymptomatic testing for the general public in England. This means LFD tests and PCR tests will no longer be available to the public. People will be able to purchase LFD tests.
* Consolidate guidance to the public and businesses, in line with public health advice.