

Dear Parents/Carers,

Important changes to COVID-19 guidance

On 24th February 2022, the Government changed the guidance for people who test positive for COVID-19 and their close contacts. I am writing to let you know what the new guidance means for you and your children and how together we can ensure we reduce the risk of disruption to your child's education while keeping our pupils, staff and families safe.

1. Please continue to keep your child off school if they test positive or have symptoms of COVID-19

Although the Government has removed the legal requirement to self-isolate after a positive COVID-19 test result, we ask that all adults and children who test positive for COVID-19 or develop ANY of the three main symptoms of COVID-19 stay at home and self-isolate. Anyone with symptoms should get a PCR test as soon as possible. Please find details about how to arrange a PCR test at the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

If the result of your child's PCR test is negative, they no longer need to remain at home and they can return to school as soon as they are well enough to do so.

If the result of your child's PCR test is positive, they must **not come into school for at least 5 days** from the date when symptoms started or the date of the test if they had no symptoms. (Day 0 being date of symptoms onset / test, day 1 the next day and so on). They should take a lateral flow device (LFD) test on day 5 and another LFD test on the following day, at least 24 hours later. If both these test results are negative, and they do not have a high temperature, they can safely return to school. Otherwise, please keep your child off school for a full 10-day period. Please contact your child's school to let them know they will be off school and update them after day 5 if they are testing positive so school knows how long they will be absent (please see also section 5 below).

The three main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- A high temperature
- A new continuous cough
- **A loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell.**

Please be reassured that for most people, and especially children, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

2. Close contacts of a positive case may continue to come to school if they are well

If your child has been in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, they are no longer required to take daily tests or self-isolate. They should continue to attend school or nursery as normal, as long as they themselves remain well. If they develop any symptoms, they should book a PCR test and self-isolate as described above.

3. Please continue taking twice-weekly LFD tests

In order to keep pupils and staff safe and minimise the risk of further disruption, we are asking staff, parents and secondary school aged children to continue taking an LFD (no symptom) test twice

per week until 31st March 2022. This will help to pick up new cases of COVID-19 earlier before infection has the opportunity to spread.

Test kits provided by the Department for Education to schools should only be used for symptom free testing in special educational needs and disability settings and when managing an outbreak. For all other settings, test kits are available free of charge through a range of options, including many local pharmacies, calling 119, ordering online via from Gov.UK or at community sites. Please see the Camden Council website for more information.

4. How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19.

Do

- Get vaccinated as it is the best way to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19. If you or your child is eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine but have not yet had it please find more information here on how and where to get vaccinated
- Meet people outside if possible and open doors and windows to let in fresh air if meeting people inside
- Continue to wear a face covering (unless you are exempt) while on public transport and in indoor public places
- Take regular lateral flow (no symptom) tests while these remain free of charge
- If you have COVID-19 symptoms, get a PCR test straight away and stay at home until you get the result.
- If you live in the same household as someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, consider staying at home if you can. If you need to work or go out for other reasons, wear a face covering, maintain distancing and avoid crowded areas wherever possible. Children who live in the same house as someone who tested positive should continue to attend school/nursery.
- If you have had close contact with someone who has tested positive but do not live with them, be vigilant for symptoms and take extra care to follow the precautions in place for the general population at: www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do
- Wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds and use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze and put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards.

5. Attendance at school

Please note that children's attendance at school remains a significant area of concern and we would appreciate support from parents and families in this regard.

COVID-19 has not gone away but neither has the importance of attending school regularly and on time so that your children do not miss out on any more of the benefits of face-to-face learning than they already have due to the pandemic.

I know that this remains a difficult time for families and I thank you for your support as we work to keep our schools, nurseries and wider community safe.

Yours sincerely,



Kirsten Watters FFPH
Director of Public Health