

COVID-19 schools guidance: End of term letter for parents

Dear parent/carer,

Thank you for your co-operation during this summer term. We realise that self-isolating your child if necessary can cause disruption to family life but it is very important to follow self-isolation rules to help break the chain of transmission of COVID-19.

At Public Health Dorset we are working with schools in the Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council areas, to ensure children and staff stay healthy and safe while keeping schools open.

The latest government announcement has meant that we are changing the way we work with schools, but important infection control measures are in place. Here are the changes:

Class bubbles

You may have heard in the latest government announcement that from today (Monday 19 July) there is no longer a need for class bubbles.

In the Dorset and BCP Council areas we will support schools to continue to operate class bubbles until Friday 23 July, where possible, to keep children safe and well until the end of term.

Contract tracing

From Monday 19 July, schools will no longer be responsible for contact tracing. NHS Test and Trace will take on this responsibility and work with parents and carers to identify close contacts of a positive case. There is no change to self-isolation requirements from 19 July, so close contacts will continue to be asked to self-isolate for 10 days. NHS Test and Trace use the same criteria as schools have previously to identify close contacts and determine any self-isolation periods for adults and children.

It remains important to report any positive test results to schools until the end of term, to record absence accordingly.

Self-isolation

From Monday 16 August, children under the age of 18 years old and fully vaccinated adults will no longer need to self-isolate as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. 18-year-olds will be treated in the same way as children until 4 months after their 18th birthday, to allow time for them to get fully vaccinated.

Instead of self-isolating, these close contacts will be identified using the same criteria as schools have used previously and will be advised to take a PCR test.

Adults who are not fully vaccinated and are close contacts of a positive case must self-isolate.

Testing

Summer Holidays

Regular asymptomatic rapid testing using Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests for staff and secondary aged children remains in place until the end of term.

Regular testing will pause in school over the summer except for in those that remain open such as summer schools, out of school settings and those that do not operate on a term-time basis.

We ask families to continue to do regular LFD tests at home over the summer. It is important to remember not to use LFD tests if anyone in the household is symptomatic. If anyone develops symptoms, they must book a PCR test and self-isolate until a result is received.

Secondary school testing

All secondary school pupils should receive two on-site lateral flow device tests, 3 to 5 days apart, on their return in the autumn term.

Secondary schools and colleges may commence testing from three working days before the start of term and can stagger return of pupils across the first week to manage this. Schools will update parents and carers on how they will be doing this.

Pupils should then continue to test twice weekly at home until the end of September, when national guidance will be reviewed.

Your school will advise you when your child will be tested on their return, and where consent has previously been provided, this will not be requested again from parents. New students will require parental consent for assisted testing at school.

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, **you should organise for your child to be tested** via the [NHS online portal](#) or by calling 119. Your household should isolate until you receive the test results giving the all clear.

Symptoms of COVID 19

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature and/or
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

Whilst legal restrictions have eased, we would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the importance of following the key public health measures to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in our school and the wider community.

- Keep your distance from anyone who isn't in your household or support bubble
- Wash your hands frequently for 20 seconds or more
- Wear a face covering in enclosed public spaces
- Self-isolate with your household and arrange a test if you have symptoms

Further information is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Yours sincerely

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