

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Education and Childcare Settings

(Compiled by the local Public Health Team)

These answers are based on the latest guidance from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the Department for Education (DFE).

Q1 A child/member of staff has symptoms of a respiratory infection should they be in the setting?

Children or adults with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or mild cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education or childcare setting.

Children or adults who are unwell **and have a high temperature** should stay at home and where possible avoid contact with other people. They can go back to their education or childcare setting when they no longer have a high temperature and they are well enough.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- a high temperature or shivering (chills) – a high temperature means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
- shortness of breath
- feeling tired or exhausted
- an aching body
- a headache
- a sore throat
- a blocked or runny nose
- loss of appetite
- diarrhoea
- feeling sick or being sick

The symptoms are very similar to symptoms of other illnesses, such as colds and flu.

Q2 A parent/carer has sent a child into the setting who is unwell and has said they have had a negative test - what should we do?

Regardless of the negative test result, if the child is unwell and has a high temperature they should not attend until their temperature has returned to normal. If the parent is insistent, but the child is unwell and has a high temperature, you can refuse attendance if it is considered necessary to protect others from possible infection.

If they have mild symptoms (cough, runny nose, sore throat) and do not have a high temperature they can attend.

Q3 A child has had a positive COVID-19 test result what should we do?

It is not recommended that children and young people are tested for COVID-19 unless directed to by a health professional.

If a child or young person has a positive COVID-19 test result they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test, if they can. After 3 days, if they feel well and do not have a high temperature, the risk of passing the infection on to others is much lower. This is because children and young people tend to be infectious to other people for less time than adults.

Children and young people who usually go to school, college or childcare and who live with someone who has a positive COVID-19 test result should continue to attend as normal.

Q4 A member of staff has tested positive what should we do?

Any staff who have a positive COVID-19 test result should try to stay at home for 5 days after the day they took the test and avoid contact with other people.

Q5 What should we do with our spare COVID-19 tests – should we continue to use them?

Settings should retain their stock of tests, do not distribute them and await further advice from UKHSA. Any test kits that have passed their expiry date can be disposed of as municipal (general) waste.

Q6 Do we still need to complete the Educational Settings Status Form to the DfE

In January, the DfE began a trial of automated collection of attendance data in schools. Once the trial is fully established, they will stop collecting attendance data through the form and reconsider the frequency of the collection of workforce absence data. In the interim, the educational setting status form remains a valuable data source and they will continue to collect on-site pupil attendance and workforce absence data weekly in the summer term.

From Thursday 7 April, the form will be updated to remove questions on pupil absence due to COVID-19, and questions about wraparound childcare.

Questions on the NTP will continue to be asked every 3 to 6 weeks. The form will remain open every day for settings to report school or college closures, by exception.

Further guidance on [the automated collection of attendance data and how schools can join the trial](#) is available or email: [contact us](#).

Q7 Do we still need to record pupils who are absent from school due to COVID-19?

Schools no longer need to record pupils who do not attend for reasons related to COVID-19, using Code X. Pupils with symptoms of COVID-19 are no longer advised to get a test, and most of the scenarios that this category was brought in to record no longer apply.

Pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 should follow the [UKHSA guidance](#) about when they should stay at home.

Where a pupil is not attending because they have symptoms of COVID-19 or have had a positive test, schools should record this using Code I (illness) unless another more appropriate absence code applies. Schools can continue to use the sub-code (I02) to record illness due to suspected COVID-19, although they are not required to.

Q8 Do we still need to include COVID-19 in our risk assessments?

The requirement for every employer to explicitly consider COVID-19 in their health and safety risk assessment has been removed. Employers may choose to continue to cover COVID-19 in their risk assessments.

See: [reducing the spread of respiratory infections, including COVID-19, in the workplace](#).

Q9 What about staff who are at higher risk from COVID-19?

There is specific [guidance for people whose immune system means that they are at higher risk](#), because they have a reduced ability to fight infections, such as COVID-19. Employers may wish to consider the needs of employees at greater risk from COVID-19, including those whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19.

Q10 If I have any concerns and need help regarding COVID-19 management who should I contact?

Please email Public.Health@bedford.gov.uk our local authority-based COVID-19 Advice and Response Cell (ARC) who will act as the first point of contact, respond where applicable and escalate concerns if required to the Local Authority Public Health Team.

You can also contact the DfE helpline on:

0800 046 8687 (Monday to Friday 8am-6pm, Saturday and Sunday from 10am-6pm).

Q11 We think we have an outbreak of COVID-19 what do we do?

All settings should have in place baseline infection prevention and control measures that will help to manage the spread of any infection, including COVID-19:

- ensuring that all staff and students who are unwell do not attend the setting (see Q1 above).
- ensuring all eligible groups are enabled and supported to take up the offer of [national immunisation](#) programmes including coronavirus (COVID-19) and flu
- ensuring occupied spaces are well ventilated and let fresh air in
- reinforcing good hygiene practices such as frequent cleaning
- considering communications to raise awareness among parents and carers of the outbreak or incident and to reinforce key messages, including the use of clear hand and respiratory hygiene measures within the setting such as [E-Bug](#)

Q12 How do we get further, specialist advice?

Education and childcare settings may consider seeking specialist advice from the East of England UKHSA Health Protection Team (see contact details below*) if they are concerned and have seen:

- a higher than previously experienced and/or rapidly increasing number of staff or student absences due to acute respiratory infection or diarrhoea and vomiting
- evidence of severe disease due to an infection, for example if a pupil, student, child or staff member is admitted to hospital
- more than one infection circulating in the same group of students and staff for example chicken pox and scarlet fever

*East of England Health Protection Team - UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Tel: 0300 303 8537 – option 1

Email: EastofEnglandHPT@phe.gov.uk www.gov.uk/ukhsa

Please ensure you also copy in the Local Authority point of contact: public.health@bedford.gov.uk

Q13 Do I still need to report COVID-19 positive cases to the Local Authority Public Health Team?

Education settings will **no longer** be asked to report COVID-19 cases to the local authority based Public Health Team. We would advise that all settings continue to maintain good records of COVID and non-COVID related illness to support with any potential future outbreak management.

Sources/Further information

Guidance specific to education and childcare that settings should now refer to includes:

- [UK Health Security Agency \(UKHSA\) health protection in education and childcare settings](#)
- [DfE emergency planning and response](#)
- [DfE good estate management for schools](#)

New and updated UKHSA guidance for the general population, which will also be relevant to education and childcare settings, includes:

- [guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19, or a positive test result for COVID-19](#)
- [living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19](#)
- [ventilation of indoor spaces to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections](#)
- [COVID-19 guidance for people whose immune system means they are at higher risk](#)
- [reducing the spread of respiratory infections, including COVID-19, in the workplace.](#)