



Reducing the spread of respiratory infections Policy, including COVID-19 in the workplace and living with COVID-19

This policy relates to the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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This policy covers the principles for workplace management to reduce the spread of respiratory infections. It replaces Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19).

As we learn to live safely with coronavirus (COVID-19), there are actions we can all take to help reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 and passing it on to others. These actions will also help to reduce the spread of other respiratory infection, such as flu, which can spread easily and may cause serious illness in some people.

Who this information is for

The information contained in this policy will help the School community to understand how to reduce the spread of respiratory infections such as COVID-19 and flu at the School. This is especially important if there are people in the workplace whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19.

While there is no longer a requirement for all employers to explicitly consider COVID-19 in their statutory health and safety risk assessments, it is important that we continue to comply with our legal obligations relating to health and safety, employment and equality duties.

Actions to reduce the spread of respiratory infections, including COVID-19

Encourage and enable vaccination

Vaccinations are very effective at preventing serious illness from COVID-19, flu and other diseases. In accordance with existing legal obligations, the School will consider how best to support and enable staff who wish to be vaccinated to get their vaccines when offered them.

There is a [COVID-19 vaccination guide](#) for employers which contains information on actions employers can take to enable staff vaccination. There is also guidance available on the [vaccines that are available through the NHS](#).

Remember the basics of good hygiene

Following these basic rules of good hygiene will help to protect you and others from common infections as well as COVID-19:

- cover your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze
- wash your hands
- clean your surroundings

Cover your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze

Coughing and sneezing increases the number of particles released by a person, the distance the particles travel and the time they stay in the air. If an infected person coughs or sneezes without covering their nose and mouth, it will significantly increase the risk of infecting others around them. By covering your nose and mouth, you will reduce the spread of particles carrying the virus.

Cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when you cough or sneeze. Put used tissues in a bin and immediately wash your hands or use hand sanitiser. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow, not into your hand.

Wash or sanitise your hands

Hands touch many surfaces and can become contaminated with viruses and other germs. Once contaminated, hands can transfer these to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the germs can enter your body and infect you.

Washing or sanitising your hands removes viruses and other germs, so you are less likely to become infected if you touch your face. Using soap and water is the most effective way to clean your hands, especially if they are visibly dirty. Hand sanitiser can be used when soap and water are not available. You should do this regularly throughout the day.

In addition, wash your hands:

- after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose
- before you eat or handle food
- after coming into contact with surfaces touched by many others, such as handrails, and shared areas such as kitchens and bathrooms
- when returning home

Maintain a clean workplace

Keeping workplaces clean reduces the risk of infection and can reduce sickness in a workforce. We will maintain our enhanced cleaning regime paying particular attention to surfaces that are touched frequently, such as handles, light switches, work surfaces and electronic devices such as remote controls and photocopiers.

Staff will be supported to maintain a clean working environment by providing them with cleaning products, soap and hot water, and/or sanitiser.

Let fresh air in

Bringing in fresh air to occupied spaces can help to reduce the concentration of respiratory particles, lowering the risk of airborne transmission of respiratory viruses.

The risk of catching or passing on COVID-19 and other respiratory infections can be higher in certain places and when doing certain activities. When someone with an infection breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release respiratory particles which can contain the virus. These particles can come into contact with the eyes, nose or mouth or can be breathed in by another person. These virus-containing particles can also land on surfaces and the virus can be passed from person to person via touch. In general, the risk of catching or passing on a respiratory infection is highest when in close contact with someone who is infected.

It is also possible to pass on a respiratory infection between people who do not have close contact, especially if they are in a crowded and/or poorly ventilated space where smaller virus particles can stay suspended in the air for some time and where there are more people who might be infectious. The risk of airborne transmission is increased when occupants in a space are participating in energetic activity, such as exercising, shouting, singing or talking loudly.

Know which symptoms to look out for

Respiratory infections can spread easily between people. It is important for staff and employers to be aware of symptoms so they can take actions to reduce the risk of spreading the infection to other people.

The symptoms of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections are very similar so it is not possible to tell if you have COVID-19, flu or another infection based on symptoms alone. Most

people with COVID-19 will have a relatively mild illness, especially if they have been vaccinated.

Symptoms of COVID-19, flu and common respiratory infections include:

- continuous cough
- high temperature, fever or chills
- loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell
- shortness of breath
- unexplained tiredness, lack of energy
- muscle aches or pains that are not due to exercise
- not wanting to eat or not feeling hungry
- headache that is unusual or longer lasting than usual
- sore throat, stuffy or runny nose
- diarrhoea, feeling sick or being sick

Some people may continue to have a cough or feel tired after other symptoms have improved, but this does not mean that they are still infectious. You can find information about these symptoms on the [NHS website](#).

What to do if you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19

If you are unwell with symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, you should follow the [guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection such as COVID-19](#).

As we learn to live safely with COVID-19, there are actions we can all take to help reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 and passing it on to others. These actions will also help to reduce the spread of other respiratory infections. COVID-19 and other respiratory infections such as flu can spread easily and cause serious illness in some people.

Vaccinations are very effective at preventing serious illness from COVID-19, however even if you are vaccinated there is a chance you might catch COVID-19 or another respiratory infection and pass it on to other people.

Regular asymptomatic testing is no longer recommended in any education or childcare setting, including in SEND, alternative provision and children's social care settings.

Most people can no longer access free testing for COVID-19. This guidance is in 2 parts:

1. Actions you can take to protect other people if you are unwell with symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19, and you have not taken a test for COVID-19.
2. Advice for people who have taken a COVID-19 test and have received a positive test result. There is [separate guidance for people who have been informed by the NHS that they are at highest risk](#) of becoming seriously unwell and who might be eligible for new COVID-19 treatments.

People at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell from a respiratory infection, including COVID-19

People who are at higher risk from COVID-19 and other respiratory infections include:

- older people
- those who are pregnant
- those who are unvaccinated
- people of any age [whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness](#)
- people of any age with [certain long-term conditions](#)

The risk of becoming seriously unwell from COVID-19 and other respiratory infections is very low for most children and young people.

You will not always know whether someone you come into contact with outside your home is at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell. They could be strangers (for example, people you sit next to on public transport) or people you may have regular contact with (for example,

friends and work colleagues). This means it is important to follow the advice in this guidance to reduce the spread of infection and help to keep others safe.

What to do if you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19, and have not taken a COVID-19 test

Try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people

If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and you have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people, until you no longer have a high temperature (if you had one) or until you no longer feel unwell.

It is particularly important to avoid close contact with anyone who you know is at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell if they are infected with COVID-19 and other respiratory infections, especially those whose [immune system means that they are at higher risk of serious illness, despite vaccination](#).

If you leave your home

If you leave your home while you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, and you have a high temperature or feel unwell, avoid close contact with anyone who you know is at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell, especially [those whose immune system means that they are at higher risk of serious illness, despite vaccination](#).

The following actions will reduce the chance of passing on your infection to others:

- wearing a well-fitting face covering made with multiple layers or a surgical face mask
- avoiding crowded places such as public transport, large social gatherings, or anywhere that is enclosed or poorly ventilated
- taking any exercise outdoors in places where you will not have close contact with other people
- covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze; wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose and before you eat or handle food; avoid touching your face

Children and young people (aged 18 years and under) who have symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19

Respiratory infections are common in children and young people, particularly during the winter months. Symptoms can be caused by several respiratory infections including the common cold, COVID-19 and RSV.

For most children and young people, these illnesses will not be serious, and they will soon recover following rest and plenty of fluids.

Very few children and young people with respiratory infections become seriously unwell. This is also true for children and young people with long-term conditions.

Attending education is hugely important for children and young people's health and their future.

When children and young people with symptoms should stay at home and when they can return to education

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

Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can. They can go back to school and resume normal activities when they no longer have a high temperature and they are well enough to attend.

All children and young people with respiratory symptoms should be encouraged to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when coughing and/or sneezing and to wash their hands after using or disposing of tissues.

It can be difficult to know when to seek help if your child is unwell. If you are worried about your child, especially if they are aged under 2 years old, then you should seek medical help.

What to do if you have a positive COVID-19 test result

Try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people

If you have a positive COVID-19 test result, it is very likely that you have COVID-19 even if you do not have any symptoms. You can pass on the infection to others, even if you have no symptoms.

Many people with COVID-19 will no longer be infectious to others after 5 days. If you have a positive COVID-19 test result, try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for **5 days** after the day you took your test. There is [different advice for children and young people aged 18 and under](#) (see below).

During this period there are actions you can take to reduce the risk of passing COVID-19 on to others. Try to work from home if you can. If you have been asked to attend a medical or dental appointment in person, contact your healthcare provider and let them know about your positive test result.

At the end of this period, if you have a high temperature or feel unwell, try to follow this advice until you feel well enough to resume normal activities and you no longer have a high temperature if you had one.

Although many people will no longer be infectious to others after 5 days, some people may be infectious to other people for up to 10 days from the start of their infection. You should avoid meeting people at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell from COVID-19, especially [those whose immune system means that they are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19, despite vaccination](#), for 10 days after the day you took your test.

If you leave your home

If you leave your home during the 5 days after your positive test result the following steps will reduce the chance of passing on COVID-19 to others:

- wear a well-fitting face covering made with multiple layers or a surgical face mask
- avoid crowded places such as public transport, large social gatherings, or anywhere that is enclosed or poorly ventilated
- take any exercise outdoors in places where you will not have close contact with other people
- cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze; wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose and before you eat or handle food; avoid touching your face

What to do if you are a close contact of someone who has had a positive test result for COVID-19

People who live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 are at the highest risk of becoming infected because they are most likely to have prolonged close contact. People who stayed overnight in the household of someone with COVID-19 while they were infectious are also at high risk.

If you are a household or overnight contact of someone who has had a positive COVID-19 test result it can take up to 10 days for your infection to develop. It is possible to pass on COVID-19 to others, even if you have no symptoms.

You can reduce the risk to other people by taking the following steps:

- avoid contact with anyone you know who is at [higher risk of becoming severely unwell](#) if they are infected with COVID-19, especially [those whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19, despite vaccination](#)
- limit close contact with other people outside your household, especially in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces
- wear a well-fitting face covering made with multiple layers or a surgical face mask if you do need to have close contact with other people, or you are in a crowded place
- wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitiser

If you develop symptoms of a respiratory infection try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people and follow the guidance for people with symptoms.

If you are a contact of someone with COVID-19 but do not live with them or did not stay in their household overnight, you are at lower risk of becoming infected. There is [guidance on protecting yourself and others in living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19](#).

Children and young people aged 18 years and under who have a positive test result

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.

How to reduce the spread of infection with people you live with, if you have COVID-19

If you have COVID-19, there is a high risk that others in your household will catch it from you.

There are several things you can do to reduce the spread of infection in your household.

1. Limit close contact with others. Spend as little time as possible in communal areas.
2. Regularly clean frequently touched surfaces and shared rooms like kitchens and bathrooms.
3. Wash your hands regularly using soap and water, particularly after coughing and sneezing.
4. Get help where possible from those you live with. Ask for help with cleaning and being brought food safely to avoid unnecessary contact.
5. Use a face covering if you need to spend time in shared spaces.
6. Keep rooms well ventilated.
7. Catch coughs and sneezes in disposable tissues and put them straight in the bin.

Outbreaks in the workplace

There is no requirement to report workplace outbreaks of respiratory infections to our local public health team. However, if we experience high levels of people with respiratory symptoms in the School, the actions detailed above here will help to reduce the spread, so they will be promoted and applied more rigorously.

Management of members of staff who are at risk of serious illness from COVID-19

Some workers are at a greater risk of serious illness from COVID-19, for example people who have a weakened immune system.

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. The School will 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.