

01/09/2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope you and your children had an enjoyable and safe summer break, and are ready for the start of the academic year. With your children returning to the classroom, we wanted to take this opportunity to write about the changes this term in schools across the country. Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/backtoschool.

Each school will have completed their own risk assessment and identified specific measures for their settings. In the first instance, we would encourage you to check with your school directly to find out more about their plans. Below, we have set out a summary of relevant national guidance.

Safety Measures

- Schools and educational settings will remove 'pupil bubbles' and social distancing/mixing measures.
- Children and young people will no longer be required to wear face coverings in school, however it is recommended that a face covering be worn in 'crowded and enclosed places' e.g. on public or dedicated school transport.
- Regular hand washing, personal hygiene and ventilation continue to be extremely important in stopping the spread of COVID-19.
- If there is a substantial increase in the number of positive cases in your children's educational setting, you might be advised by your educational setting that some control measures need to be temporarily reintroduced.

Contact Tracing

- From the Autumn term, NHS Test & Trace will be responsible for contact tracing of all positive cases. If your child or young person tests positive for COVID-19, you should still inform your educational setting, however contact tracing will then be conducted by NHS Test & Trace.
- Those under the age of 18 and 6 months are no longer advised to isolate if they are identified as a close contact of a COVID-19 case. They will be asked to take a PCR test. If the PCR result is positive, the individual will then be required to self-isolate. All known contacts of positive COVID-19 cases should be reported to NHS Test & Trace, no matter vaccination status or age.

Symptomatic Testing (PCR)

- If your child develops COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, you should book an appointment for them to have a PCR test. They should not come into school

whilst they are awaiting the test results, even if they feel better. If the test is negative, they can return to school. If they test is positive they should continue to isolate and follow public health advice.

- You can book an appointment at www.gov.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119.
- Information on symptoms can be found at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/.

Testing with No Symptoms (LFD)

- Taking regular rapid lateral flow tests (LFD tests) continues to be one of the most effective ways to reduce transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, we encourage parents, carers, secondary and college children to take part in LFD testing.
- If you attend or work at a school, college or nursery you can get rapid tests through your school, college or nursery. Further details of this will be provided by your educational setting.
- There is no need for primary age pupils (those in year 6 and below) to do testing if they do not have symptoms or are not a contact of a positive COVID-19 case.
- Information about testing is available at www.sefton.gov.uk/covid-19-in-sefton/covid-19-testing

Vaccination

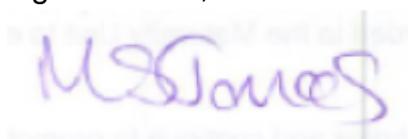
- The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective and they give the best protection against the virus. We would encourage those who are eligible to get both doses as soon as possible. More information on COVID-19 vaccines can be found at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination.

We know that this is a challenging time for both yourselves and your children and we would like to thank you for your continued support in helping our schools to operate effectively whilst minimising COVID-19 transmission and keeping staff and pupils safe. For more information, advice and guidance, please visit our dedicated FAQ page at www.sefton.gov.uk/covid-19-in-sefton/covid-19-and-schools/schools-faqs/

Finally, we would like to wish your children all the success in this upcoming academic year.

Yours Sincerely,

Margaret Jones,



Director of Public Health
Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council



HM Government



Supporting students at secondary school or college: what you need to know



School or college is the best place for young people to be.

With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, young people are now able to enjoy more freedom in their education.

Being at school or college keeps young people's education on track, so they can achieve their full potential, while also benefitting their mental and physical health and wellbeing.

We're doing everything we can to ensure young people can continue to attend school or college.

What COVID-19 measures will change at my child's school or college?

School or college will feel different as COVID-19 measures are relaxed.

- Bubbles and staggered start and finish times are no longer advised
- Young people can again have breaktimes and lunch together and take part in practical lessons and sports with other classes and year groups
- Face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors
- Schools and colleges are advised to continue with regular handwashing, cleaning regimes, and to keep space well ventilated
- Rapid COVID-19 testing of secondary and college students should continue even for those who have been vaccinated. If your child is under 18 and 6 months and is identified as a close contact they will not need to self-isolate. Instead, they will be advised to take a PCR test
- Schools and colleges will have plans in place on what to do if anyone at school tests positive for COVID-19, or if additional measures are needed to be reintroduced for a limited period

Should my child attend school or college?

Yes, attendance is mandatory. Public Health England and the Government's Chief Medical & Scientific Officers agree that there is a very low risk and rate of severe illness in children and young people from COVID-19.

The benefit of attending school or college continues to significantly outweigh the COVID-19 health risk to children and young people. If you have concerns, you should discuss these with your school or college and local authority so that your child is able to continue attending school or college.

Does my child need to continue doing COVID-19 tests?

Yes. Secondary school and college students should test when they return at the start of term. They are advised to take two on-site rapid COVID-19 tests (3-5 days apart), followed by twice weekly testing at home. The tests are easy to do and results come back within 30 minutes.

You should report the results straight away, whether positive, negative or void, either online at [gov.uk/report-covid19-result](https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result) or by calling 119, free from your mobile or landline. If the test is positive then the person should also take a confirmatory PCR test and follow the latest government guidance.

Around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 have no symptoms and can spread it without knowing. Taking regular rapid tests will help give you peace of mind that your child is not spreading the virus without knowing.

What should I do if my child has COVID-19 symptoms?

If your child has any of the main COVID-19 symptoms (a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste), they should not attend school or college and should stay at home.

You should arrange for them to get a **PCR test** and tell your child's school or college the test results. Your child should not attend school or college while you are waiting for test results, even if they are feeling better.

If the test is negative, they should go to school or college as normal. If they test positive, they should continue to isolate and follow public health advice.

What happens if my child has been in contact with someone with COVID-19 symptoms?

If your child has been identified as a close contact, you will be advised that your child takes a PCR test.

They will not have to self-isolate, unless they have a positive PCR test result.

Will my child be vaccinated?

All 16 and 17-year-olds in England are now eligible for their first COVID-19 vaccine dose. Anyone in this age group can now find their nearest centre through the 'grab a jab' **NHS online walk-in finder**.

The NHS will also contact 12 to 15 year-olds to receive the vaccine if they are previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable, have an underlying health condition or may live with an individual who is immunosuppressed.

If my child was previously considered as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), should they attend school or college?

Yes. All young people who were considered as CEV should have returned to school or college following the end of shielding measures on 1 April 2021.

Further guidance will be given to parents of children who were previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable where necessary.

Will my child be required to continue any remote learning?

If your child is isolating due to a positive PCR test, schools and colleges will continue to implement high-quality remote education for students so that they can learn from home if they are well enough.

How will my child catch up on any lost learning?

There is lots of support available to help your child catch up on any lost learning over the course of the pandemic or to boost their wellbeing.

To find out more about what's on offer and who's eligible, visit: <https://educationcatchup.campaign.gov.uk/> or speak to your child's school or college.

For further information and guidance:

- To find out more about what to expect when pupils return to school or college in September, visit: gov.uk/backtoschool
- How to order a rapid COVID-19 test for asymptomatic testing: <https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk>
- How to take a test: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/how-to-do-a-test-at-home-or-at-a-test-site/how-to-do-a-rapid-lateral-flow-test/>
- How to report your rapid COVID-19 test results: <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result> or call 119 (free from mobile or landline)
- How to order a PCR test if you or your child has COVID-19 symptoms: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>