

28th February 2022

Dear Parent / Carer,

We have all been following closely the announcements made by the Government last week to end the majority of COVID-19 restrictions. We thought it would be useful to summarise the Government's main points as they affect us and our recommendations across Pathfinder Schools.

Staff and students in most education and childcare settings are no longer asked to undertake twice weekly testing. We would continue to recommend that children and young people with symptoms undertake testing. Lateral flow tests remain available to families and can be [ordered here](#).

From the 24th February, the legal requirement to self-isolate after a positive test or for those over 18 who are not vaccinated to isolate for 10 days was removed. However, guidance makes it clear that children and young people with COVID-19 should not attend their educational setting while they are infectious. They should take an LFD test from 5 days after their symptoms started (or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms) followed by another one the next day. If both these test results are negative, they should return to their educational setting if they normally attend one, as long as they feel well enough to do so and do not have a temperature. Those who test positive should avoid contact with anyone in an at-risk group, including if they live in the same household. The current advice from the Department for Education outlines that Headteachers can refuse access to school if a pupil has a confirmed case of COVID-19 or any of the three COVID-19 symptoms:

- a high temperature – this 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 (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

We know that the symptoms experienced can be much more varied than this so would advise you to take a lateral flow test if you have any doubt.

Fully vaccinated close contacts and those aged under 18 will no longer have to test daily for 7 days, and the legal requirement for close contacts who are not fully vaccinated to self-isolate has been removed.

Routine contact tracing will end. Contacts of positive cases will no longer be required to self-isolate or be advised to take daily tests, however it will still be necessary to test if there are any symptoms.

From the 1st April, the Government will update the steps that anyone with COVID-19 should take to minimise contact with other people. We expect at this point further guidance on how to deal with suspected COVID.

Where there are outbreaks, we will continue to work with public health and follow their advice at all times. This may include the wearing of face coverings in communal spaces or advice for further asymptomatic testing. We will of course keep you informed should this happen.

The general measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 remain in place until April 1st. Individuals can still reduce the risk of catching and passing on COVID-19 by:

- Getting vaccinated
- Letting fresh air in if meeting indoors, or by meeting outside
- Wearing a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces, especially where you come into contact with people you do not usually meet, when rates of transmission are high.
- Trying to stay at home if you are unwell
- Taking a test if you have COVID-19 symptoms, and staying at home and avoiding contact with other people if you test positive
- Washing your hands and following advice to *Catch it, Bin it, Kill it*

We are now moving into a new phase of learning to live with COVID in our daily lives and taking the necessary precautions to prevent its spread. We thank you as always for working with us to help this happen as smoothly as possible.



Ann Davey

Chief Executive