

Responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID19 – Schools

Updated 17th August

Overview:

Child or staff member develops symptoms.
They self-isolate immediately.

Child or staff member accesses a test.

If positive: Essex Contact Tracing Team/ PHE will liaise with the individual, school and family and advise on who needs to self-isolate as a result.

In order to assist with identifying close contacts schools will need to know which children:

- use home to school transport
- attend before or after school clubs
- are in which bubbles/ groups within school

If test result is negative, child or staff member can return to school/work once feeling well (as usual practice).

Sources: [Full Opening Guidance](#)
[safe working in education](#)
[implementing the protective measures in education](#)
Public Health advice
[testing and tracing for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

<p>If symptoms develop during the school day:</p>	<p>If a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms of the coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate immediately, only leaving the house to access a test.</p> <p>If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, with appropriate adult supervision if required depending on the age of the child. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.</p> <p>If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.</p> <p>PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if direct personal care is needed and a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).</p>
<p>If a child/staff member begins displaying symptoms outside of school.</p>	<p>The individual must not come to school. You should encourage them to seek a test and request that they inform you of the outcome of their test.</p> <p>If the individual arrives at school, they should be sent home immediately.</p>
<p>How to Access a Test</p>	<p>Tests can be booked online through the NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet. Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have priority access to testing.</p>
<p>Home Testing Kits</p>	<p>From the autumn term, all schools will be provided with 10 home testing kits.</p> <p>Home test kits should only be offered to individuals in the exceptional circumstance that you believe an individual may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere. The best and fastest way for students or staff to access a test is to visit a testing site.</p> <p>The full guidance is here:</p>

Sources: [Full Opening Guidance safe working in education implementing the protective measures in education](#)
Public Health advice
[testing and tracing for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

	<p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-home-test-kits-for-schools-and-fe-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-home-test-kits-for-schools-and-fe-providers</p>
<p>If a pupil or staff member tests positive – identifying others who need to self-isolate.</p>	<p>When an individual tests positive for COVID19 the NHS Test and Trace programme is engaged. For schools, this means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Essex Contact Tracing Team (ECTT) will liaise with that individual to understand their recent movements • The team will contact the school to carry out a ‘rapid risk assessment’ and confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious. The school will need to have information readily available, on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Which children and staff are in which groups in school ○ Which children travel to school on home to school transport ○ Which children and staff attend before/after school clubs • If the child has used home to school transport the ECTT may need to liaise with the operator directly to ascertain any additional children using the same transport who also need to self-isolate • The school must send home those staff/pupils identified as having been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person (during the infections period as advised by ECTT) • The ECTT will also liaise with the family (if it is a pupil) to identify any out of school/ social close contacts. Schools are not expected to know which contacts their staff or pupils have had outside of school. <p>Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If this occurs, they must follow the process for anyone who develops COVID19 symptoms; self-isolate and seek a test.</p>

Sources: [Full Opening Guidance safe working in education implementing the protective measures in education](#)
Public Health advice
[testing and tracing for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

<p>Self-isolation following a positive test</p>	<p>If an individual tests positive they must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal.</p> <p>The 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill.</p> <p>Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.</p> <p><u>‘stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection’</u></p>
<p>Informing Public Health of positive case/s</p>	<p>If there is a confirmed case within your school in a member of staff or child, you should inform Public Health.</p> <p>To notify a case(s) to PHE, schools can call Public Health England (PHE) in the East of England on 0300 303 8537 (option 1). If the matter is not urgent, schools can also email: eoecrc@phe.gov.uk to notify PHE.</p> <p>We also ask that you inform schoolscommunication@essex.gov.uk</p>
<p>Cleaning the area following a case of COVID 19</p>	<p>All surfaces that the symptomatic person has come into contact with must be cleaned and disinfected, including; bathrooms, door handles, telephones, grab-rails in corridors and stairwells.</p> <p>Use disposable cloths or paper roll and disposable mop heads, to clean all hard surfaces, floors, chairs, door handles and sanitary fittings, following one of the options below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a combined detergent disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1,000 parts per million available chlorine • a household detergent followed by disinfection (1000 ppm av.cl.). Follow manufacturer’s instructions for dilution, application and contact times for all detergents and disinfectants

Sources: [Full Opening Guidance safe working in education implementing the protective measures in education](#)
Public Health advice
[testing and tracing for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if an alternative disinfectant is used within the organisation, this should be checked and ensure that it is effective against enveloped viruses <p>Areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time, such as corridors, but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids can be cleaned thoroughly as normal.</p> <p>Avoid creating splashes and spray when cleaning.</p> <p>Any cloths and mop heads used must be disposed of and should be put into waste bags as outlined below.</p> <p>The minimum PPE to be worn for cleaning an area where a person with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) is disposable gloves and an apron.</p> <p>Hands should be washed with soap and water for 20 seconds after all PPE has been removed.</p>
<p>Who should access a test?</p>	<p>The symptomatic individual should access a test as soon as possible.</p> <p>The symptoms for testing are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature) • 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) • 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 <p>Contacts of this individual should only access testing if they themselves become symptomatic.</p> <p>If a contact who has been asked to self-isolate, goes on to display symptoms, accesses a test but it is negative – they still cannot return to school until they have completed their 14 days isolation period (this is because they still might go on to become positive during the 14 days).</p>

Sources: [Full Opening Guidance](#)
[safe working in education](#)
[implementing the protective measures in education](#)
Public Health advice
[testing and tracing for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

<p>Accessing testing</p>	<p>Tests can be booked online through the NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet.</p> <p>The options for the test are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at a local test site today and get the results tomorrow • with a home test kit if they cannot get to a test site, results expected within 72 hours.
<p>Accessing testing for children:</p>	<p>Anyone with symptoms can get a coronavirus test, whatever their age. Parents should book a test via the NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website, or order by telephone via 119 for those without access to the internet.</p>
<p>Returning to school/work</p>	<p>Where the original individual tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.</p> <p>Where the child/staff member tests positive – they may return to school after 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal.</p> <p>If someone is symptomatic, tests positive and works with a vulnerable group/individual, who has greater vulnerability than the general population, it is sensible they are excluded for 14 rather than 10 days.</p>
<p>Disposing of waste</p>	<p>To dispose of waste from people with symptoms of coronavirus, such as disposable cleaning cloths, tissues and PPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • put it in a plastic rubbish bag and tie it • place the plastic bag in a second bin bag and tie it • put it in a suitable and secure place marked for storage for 72 hours <p>Waste should be stored safely and securely kept away from children. You should not put your waste in communal waste areas until the waste has been stored for at least 72 hours. Storing for 72 hours saves unnecessary waste movements and</p>

Sources: [Full Opening Guidance safe working in education implementing the protective measures in education](#)
Public Health advice
[testing and tracing for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

	<p>minimises the risk to waste operatives. This waste does not require a dedicated clinical waste collection in the above circumstances.</p> <p>If, in an emergency, you need to remove the waste before 72 hours, it must be treated as Category B infectious waste. You must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep it separate from your other waste • arrange for collection by a specialist contractor as hazardous waste <p>There will be a charge for this service.</p>
<p>Remote Learning for those self-isolating</p>	<p>Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they, and/or their parents, are complying with clinical or public health advice, schools should immediately offer access to remote education.</p> <p>The expectations around remote learning are included in the Remote Education Support Guidance, with more information expected in September.</p>

Frequently Asked Questions

<p>What should I do now to prepare for a potential case of COVID19?</p>	<p>Schools should have lists of the following, readily available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which children and staff are allocated to which groups in school (i.e. class groups, or ‘bubbles’) • Which children travel to school on home to school transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This information can be found on Infolink and/or will have been shared with you by the Integrated Passenger Transport Unit at ECC ○ You will need to ensure it is up to date following any changes from Sept ○ If known – which transport operator is used • Which children and staff attend before/after school clubs and which groups they are in for these clubs
--	---

Sources: [Full Opening Guidance safe working in education implementing the protective measures in education](#)
Public Health advice
[testing and tracing for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any close contact that takes places between children and staff in different groups <p>Schools should also consider how they will be able to ‘switch on’ remote learning provision for children who are asked to self-isolate, as quickly as possible. Note that these contingency plans are expected to be in place by end of Sept; see DFE Remote Education Support Guidance.</p>
What is defined as a ‘close contact’?	<p>Close contacts are defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> direct close contacts - face to face contact, for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin) proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) travelling in a small vehicle, like a car
What does the Test and Trace programme mean for schools?	<p>As part of the national test and trace programme, if cases occur within the school community, the Essex Contact Tracing Team or PHE will undertake a rapid investigation and advise schools and other settings on the most appropriate action to take.</p> <p>In some cases, a larger number of other children/ young people may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, site or year group.</p> <p>It is not expected that closure of the whole school will be necessary where schools are following advice around infection control.</p>
Do other staff members need to self-isolate if a staff member tests positive?	<p>No, other staff members outside of those identified through the Essex Contact Tracing Team’s investigation do not need to self-isolate if a teacher or other staff member contracts COVID19.</p> <p>The reason for this is because staff members should be able to implement social distancing when at work. It is appreciated that this will not always be possible with children in the classroom and so the Essex Contact Tracing Team will advise on this.</p>
Who do we need to inform of a positive case?	<p>As soon as a pupil or member of staff has tested positive for COVID-19, please notify the Schools Communication Inbox and Public Health England:</p> <p>Schoolscommunication@essex.gov.uk</p>

Sources: [Full Opening Guidance](#)
[safe working in education](#)
[implementing the protective measures in education](#)
Public Health advice
[testing and tracing for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

	Public Health England (PHE) in the East of England on 0300 303 8537 (option 1). If the matter is not urgent, schools can also email: eoe.crc@phe.gov.uk to notify PHE.
Should a school close to deep clean?	It is not necessary to close the whole school site to deep clean as a result of a case of COVID19. It is advised that, if possible, children/staff are moved away from the area in which the symptomatic individual has been in order to clean.
If a group of people are asked to isolate but individuals within that group return a negative test, can they return to school?	Those identified by the Essex Contact Tracing Team must self-isolate for 14 days. This is because it may take a number of days for symptoms to show, in the meantime the individual could return a negative test but then go on to become positive.
Should we inform parents of a case of COVID19 in school.	Yes, it is advisable to inform the school community as soon as possible. Transparency at this time is important as it allows parents, children and staff to be even more vigilant. Schools must not share the names or details of people with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.

Sources: [Full Opening Guidance](#)
[safe working in education](#)
[implementing the protective measures in education](#)
Public Health advice
[testing and tracing for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)