

Dear all,

19<sup>th</sup> April 2022

### **Covid-19 update 19.4.22**

This letter replaces the previous letter from the Director of Public Health dated 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and summarises key messages for schools around living with Covid-19 and provides links to full guidance documents.

As you will be aware, since the 1 April 2022, free universal Covid-19 testing for the general public in England is no longer available or required. This includes testing for staff and pupils in schools, including in SEND schools.

Schools and early years settings should, however, continue to have measures in place to minimise spread of Covid-19 and other infectious diseases, such as good ventilation, making the most of outdoor time, hand hygiene and regular cleaning.

Although Covid rates remain high, the risk of serious illness from Covid-19 is much lower than earlier in the pandemic, largely due to high levels of immunity in the population from vaccination and natural immunity from infection.

Guidance for the general public now recommends that adults and children with symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as Covid-19, **and a high temperature or who 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 they no longer have a high temperature (if they had one) or until they no longer feel unwell.

Although testing is not required, if anyone does test positive for Covid-19 they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with others for 5 days (for adults) or 3 days (for children). They should avoid contact with people at high risk from Covid-19 for 10 days.

Further information for the general public is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Schools Covid-19 guidance has now been incorporated into 'health protection in education and childcare settings' guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>).

Chapter 3 provides information on various infectious diseases, and includes a section on 'respiratory infections including coronavirus (COVID-19)'

Chapter 4 details actions to take in the event of an outbreak. Settings should seek advice from LCRC if they are concerned and there is:

- higher than previously experienced and/or rapidly increasing number of staff or student absences due to acute respiratory infection
- evidence of severe disease due to respiratory infection, for example if a pupil, student, child or staff member is admitted to hospital

**Team:** Public Health

Team address: Lambeth Council, Executive Support Hub PO Box 734, Winchester SO23 5DG

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In an outbreak, settings should reinforce baseline infection control measures including:

- encouraging all staff and students who are unwell not to attend the setting.
- 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, see chapter 2
- 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

Settings may also seek advice from LCRC if they have an outbreak and are concerned.

LCRC requests that settings contact them if there is:

- A death within staff/pupil due to respiratory infections, including COVID-19
- An acute respiratory infection outbreak, including COVID-19 in a SEND school with medically vulnerable children i.e. immunocompromised or school carrying out Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPs)
- A new or ongoing outbreak in SEND school or boarding school, without medically vulnerable children (but where school have seen a rapid increase in case numbers)
- A SEND school with difficulties in applying the outbreak control measures due to residential setting or increasing complexity e.g. hospital admissions

If a pupil or staff member is hospitalised due to respiratory infections, including coronavirus (COVID-19), this does not routinely need to be reported, but if you would like advice, including with regards to communications you may also contact LCRC for support.

### Sources of support

LCRC: [lcrc@phe.gov.uk](mailto:lcrc@phe.gov.uk) or 0300 303 0450

DfE helpline: 0800 046 8687

Lambeth public health team: [publichealth@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:publichealth@lambeth.gov.uk) or 0207 926 2900

A Dept for Education and UK Health Security Agency webinar 'Living with Covid-19 – next steps for Education and childcare settings' describes the key messages for schools, the rationale behind changed guidance, and answers frequently asked questions. This is available here: [Living with Covid - Next Steps for Education and Childcare Settings Webinar](#)

### Vaccination for children, young people and staff

Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is the single most important step we can take to protect ourselves, our families and the community against Coronavirus. The vaccine is available to anyone over the age 5. For useful information about the vaccine and walk-in sites, please see here:

<https://selondonccg.nhs.uk/what-we-do/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine/>.

Thank you again for all your hard work to keep your settings safe for staff and children, and supporting children to maximise their attendance at school.

Kind regards

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