

August 2021



Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope you have had a restful and enjoyable summer.

As you get ready for your children to return to school, we want to let you know about some of the changes being made so that school can get back to being more normal for your children.

Secondary schools

If your child is in secondary school or just starting in year 7 you will have been asked by your child's school to agree to COVID-19 testing. These rapid tests are to help make sure that children are not bringing the virus back into school. Schools will offer every child two rapid tests that will be carried out in school in the first week or so of the autumn term. Your child's school will be letting you know of the arrangements to enable this testing to happen.

If your child has a positive result on one of these tests you will be asked to take them for a PCR test to confirm the result. We urge you to agree for your child to participate in these tests and then to follow this up with twice weekly home testing. The testing helps to identify children who have no symptoms.

All schools

During last school year many children were sent home just in case they had been a contact of someone who later tested positive for COVID-19. Schools worked hard to reduce the spread of the virus and the majority of those sent home to self-isolate did not develop COVID-19. We know that this was very difficult for children and parents and carers.

From this term children will not have to self-isolate if they have been a close contact of a positive case. Close contacts will be identified by Test and Trace rather than the school and will be advised to go for a PCR test. If your child is identified, please do take them for the PCR test.

If your child has any symptoms or has had a positive test they should not go to school and should follow instructions about self-isolating. Please tell your child's school why your child is off school. If your child displays any symptoms at school the school will contact you and ask you to take your child for a PCR test.

All schools will be revising their risk assessments so that they can continue to run safely and reduce the risk of spreading the virus. They will publish their risk assessment on their website. Many schools will go back to the normal start and end of the school day but may ask your child to use a particular entrance and exit to reduce mixing. They may also continue to have breaktimes at different times for different year groups. Adults in the school and visitors may be asked to wear face-coverings when in more crowded spaces or where there is poorer ventilation. Please do follow the school's rules when on the school site.

Schools, Public Health and Test & Trace will work together to monitor the number of cases in schools. During the autumn term Public Health may ask individual or groups of

schools to change their arrangements if they have a lot of positive cases. Please do follow any new arrangements that the school tells you about.

Changed guidance

Previously, schools identified the close contacts in the school of someone with COVID-19. This will now be done by NHS Test and Trace (and in Leicester, our local Track and Trace team). Schools must still be told why your child is off school.

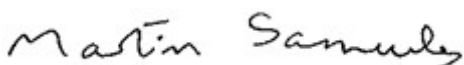
If you are fully vaccinated or aged under 18 years and 6 months, you will not need to self-isolate if you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 or are a close contact as someone with COVID-19. Fully vaccinated means it has been 14 days from your final dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

These changes mean that it is important for children, young people and families to make sure they take some actions to support schools and their community. These include:

- Eligible people accepting the invitations for COVID-19 vaccines, and having both the first and second doses.
- Agreeing to your secondary age child being part of the in-school testing and ongoing twice weekly LFD tests at home.
- Limiting close contact with other people outside their household, especially in enclosed spaces.
- Wearing a face covering in enclosed spaces and where you are unable to maintain social distancing. People attending schools can choose to wear a face covering if they wish
- Washing your hands regularly throughout the day.
- Limiting contact with anyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable
- Taking a lateral flow device (LFD) tests twice a week. You can order LFD tests at www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests
- If someone has symptoms, they should isolate and book a PCR test or calling 119
- If anyone is contacted by NHS Test and Trace, follow their instructions about isolating, identifying contacts and getting a PCR test You can order a home PCR test kit (preferred option to limit contact with others) or book an appointment at a test site. The national guidance is to take a PCR when someone is told they are a contact and at any time following this if a person develops symptoms.
A PCR test should not be taken if a person has had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days and they do not have any new symptoms.

Thank you for all the support you have given to the work to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in Leicester.

Kind regards,



Martin Samuels
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