



Doncaster Council

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Dear CEO/ Head teacher

Return to School Guidance and Advice

Covid 19 rates across Doncaster have increased rapidly, this is linked to the new Omicron variant. It is expected that these high rates will have a significant impact on the operation and business continuity of many settings, including schools and early years settings throughout January.

The [Covid-19 operational guidance](#) has been updated and includes the temporary introduction of new measures. There are also changes to [national guidance](#) around isolation periods for cases who test negative on LFDs at day 6 and 7 and new advice on daily LFD testing for close contacts.

A summary of how this affects school communities is outlined below:

Management of cases and close contacts

Cases: The self-isolation advice for people with Covid-19 has changed. It is now possible to end self-isolation after 7 days, following 2 negative LFD tests taken 24 hours apart. The first LFD test should not be taken before the sixth day. School staff and pupils who have 2 consecutive negative tests on day 6 and 7 can return to school. Any person returning to the school setting should take additional precautions to [limit close contact](#) with other people.

Close Contacts, including Household Contacts:

- **Vaccinated persons and children:** Any persons aged under 18 years and 6 months and fully vaccinated school staff are strongly advised to take an LFD test every day for 7 days. This daily test should be completed before the person leaves the household for the first time that day. If any of these test results are positive, the person should self isolate and arrange a PCR test.
- **People who are not fully vaccinated:** Any persons not fully vaccinated and living in the same household as someone with COVID-19 are legally required to stay at home and self-isolate. Fully vaccinated is defined as 14 days after having received 2 doses of an approved vaccine. This applies only to people ages 18 years and 6 months or above.

Please note: this replaces the previous local advice on Management of Household Contacts which advised PCR testing on days 3-5

If any child develops symptoms at any time, they must stay home and PCR test.

Summary of Operational Guidance

Many measures remain in place around twice weekly LFD testing (see below), hand hygiene, ventilation and cleaning regimes. Schools are not expected to operate a bubble system or complete contact tracing in most situations.

Face coverings are now recommended for all pupils in year 7 and above, including inside classrooms. Face coverings are not required outdoors on the school site. In primary schools, it is recommended that face coverings should be worn by staff and adults (including visitors) when moving around in corridors and communal areas. This is a temporary measure and further detail is provided on page 7 in the updated [operational guidance](#).

Effective ventilation continues to be key in preventing and reducing the impact of an outbreak of COVID-19. A small number of ventilation units are being provided nationally through an application process.

LFD (asymptomatic) testing – School staff, secondary aged pupils and household members of any school age child should continue with twice weekly home testing. LFD testing is most effective at identifying people with the virus when they are at their most infectious period.

PCR testing – Any pupil or staff member with new COVID 19 symptoms should arrange PCR testing and not attend the school site.

Vaccination - Continue to promote vaccination to all who are eligible.

Additional Considerations

Reflecting on the clusters and outbreaks we have seen in the previous term, we are locally advising the following steps while demand on local health systems is high:

- A number of outbreaks in the previous term included **school staff**, you may wish to review use of shared spaces and staff rooms, continue to encourage distancing between staff where possible and ensure any shared equipment is cleaned between uses.
- **Reduce mixing in larger groups** as much as possible as a preventative step to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.
- **Limit visitors to the school** and consider whether events that bring visitors or parents into the school can be managed safely or should take place online.
- **Consider additional steps that can be taken to improve the Covid security of educational visits**, given the risk of sharing transport or a room overnight increases the chance of catching COVID-19.

Staff and Pupils who are Immunocompromised

For school staff and pupils who have previously been identified as **Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV)**, this definition is no longer in place. However, a small number of people in Doncaster will be severely immunocompromised with those aged 12 and over eligible for a 3rd primary dose of vaccine. Severely immunocompromised individuals may consider advice from their health professional and their risk assessments reviewed regularly.

Support and welfare

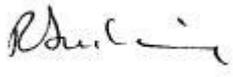
The [self isolation support grant](#) remains available and the criteria and how to apply is available at the link above.

Information about local support for self-isolation is [available here](#), including a phone number for people who need additional support in self-isolation.

Thank you again for all that you have been doing to protect pupils, staff and the wider community.

Please contact Edulog at edulog@doncaster.gov.uk or the local public health team at PHEnquiries@doncaster.gov.uk if you need any support to manage COVID 19 situations as we move into Winter. Our colleagues at UK Health Security Agency (formerly PHE) can support with concerns about outbreaks of other infectious diseases. They can be contacted at: 0113 386 0300.

Kind regards,



Dr Rupert Suckling

Director of Public Health



Riana Nelson

Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills,
Learning and Opportunities