

Dean Wallace
Director of Public Health
Adult Social Care and Health Directorate
County Hall
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 3AG

Our ref
Your ref
Date 20th April 2022

Dear Headteacher, Early Years Leader and Further Education College Principal,

Prevention and management of COVID-19 transmission within schools, colleges and early years settings in Derbyshire

Following publication of the Government's "[Living with Covid](#)" plan and the recently published [Health Protection in Education and Childcare Settings](#) guidance from UKHSA (UK Health Security Agency, formerly PHE) I wanted to write to clarify the implications for management of COVID-19 within education settings in Derbyshire.

Guidance on the management of COVID-19 in education settings is now included within this broader guidance on management of a range of infectious diseases. Although the COVID-19 specific guidance has been amalgamated into broader disease management it will be important to continue to implement the good practice that has been in place in schools and early years settings since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Implementing good infection prevention and control measures will reduce absences among children and young people and therefore help with maximizing learning time. It will also help to reduce staff absences.

Testing and isolation/exclusion from setting

From the 1st April 2022 the Government's policy on COVID-19 testing changed. The routine and free testing service for schools, nurseries and universities has now closed.

Free COVID-19 testing is now limited to health and social care staff, and some individuals identified as being at higher risk of becoming seriously ill. Everyone else who wants to continue using COVID-19 tests must buy a COVID-19 test.

The legal requirement to isolate following a positive COVID-19 test has now been removed, however, the emphasis is on the individual to reduce spreading infection to other people where possible at all times.

The guidance for education settings is now:

- Children with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or mild cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education or childcare setting.
- Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and where possible avoid contact with other people. They can go back to their education or childcare setting when they no longer have a high temperature and they are well enough.

- If a child or young person has a positive COVID-19 test result, they should try to stay at home and, where possible, avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test. The risk of passing the infection on to others is much lower after 3 days if they feel well and do not have a high temperature.
- Children and young people who usually attend an education or childcare setting and who live with someone who has a positive COVID-19 test result should continue to attend as normal, as long as they feel well.
- Any staff who have a positive COVID-19 test result should try to stay at home for 5 days after the day they took the test.

Preventing illness in education settings

The measures below that have been put in place in response to COVID-19 are important to reduce the spread of other infectious diseases, and I would encourage education settings to continue with these:

- Encourage children and young people, and staff, to wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day
- Encourage children and young people to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve (not their hands) when they cough or sneeze
- Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash hands afterwards
- Where possible, support people to meet people outside and avoid large crowds in unventilated areas
- Open doors and windows to let in fresh air
- Follow guidance to keep settings clean, in particular surfaces that people touch a lot
- Ensure all staff are aware of what to do if there are cases of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases within your setting.
- Resources such as the UK Health Security Agency (UKSHA) produced “E-bugs” are important to help children and young people understand how illnesses can spread and is tailored for each key stage <https://www.e-bug.eu/>. A guide to common infectious diseases is included with this letter, and further information is available on the [Public Health Derbyshire](#) section of Derbyshire SchoolsNet.

One of the most important ways of protecting ourselves, our children and our community from ill health is through vaccination. Thank you for your support in accommodating the COVID-19 vaccination in schools, alongside the routine vaccination programmes that are administered in schools.

It is important to encourage all of the school/early years community to be up to date with routine vaccinations including pre-school boosters in younger children, HPV (human papillomavirus) and MenACWY (meningococcal) vaccinations for older students and those starting higher education. As an employer, staff should be supported and encouraged to take up all eligible vaccinations, such as COVID-19 and influenza.

Management of outbreaks and reporting of cases

Thank you to all settings who have informed and updated Derbyshire Public Health’s team about COVID-19 cases over the last 2 years. This has been invaluable to both our surveillance of case numbers across Derbyshire but also to allow us to offer support to each setting.

There is no longer a need for education settings to send through information on COVID-19 cases to Derbyshire Public Health, and specialist advice on the management of all infectious diseases, including COVID-19, will now be provided by UKHSA.

Education and childcare settings may consider seeking specialist advice from UKHSA if they are concerned and have seen:

- a higher than previously experienced and/or rapidly increasing number of staff or student absences due to acute respiratory infection or diarrhoea and vomiting
- evidence of severe disease due to an infection, for example if a pupil, student, child, or staff member is admitted to hospital
- more than one infection circulating in the same group of students and staff, for example chicken pox and scarlet fever.

Most infectious diseases in education and childcare settings can be managed by following the advice provided in the [UKHSA guidance](#) and ensuring children, young people and staff follow the recommended exclusion periods. A summary of exclusion periods for common diseases is included with this letter.

The UKHSA East Midlands team can be contacted on Phe.crc.eastmidlands@phe.gov.uk or 0344 2254 524.

Please note that all national guidance referencing “local health protection teams” refers to UKHSA’s East Midlands Health Protection Team and not Derbyshire Public Health.

I would like to thank you for your support over the last 2 years and look forward to continuing to work with your setting to prevent the spread of infectious diseases in the future.

With thanks



Dean Wallace
Director of Public Health