

How we manage COVID-19 in our schools

The number of positive COVID-19 cases across Dumfries and Galloway is extremely high at this time. The number of new, confirmed positive cases is continuing to rise. As such, it is inevitable that positive COVID-19 cases are impacting our schools.

The Scottish Government has updated the guidance on how COVID-19 cases are managed in our schools. It is very different to how this was done last term.

We will try and outline these changes for you.

IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS

The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a 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)
- a 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

If you are experiencing symptoms, you must start to self-isolate and book a PCR test.

How we identify close contacts in school:



Test and Protect will contact individuals who test positive for COVID-19 to identify and close contacts.

In the new Guidance, contacts in schools have changed significantly. No longer will whole classes be asked to isolate when a classmate has tested positive. Normal day to day activities in school will not generate any close contacts. Individuals who sit next to a positive case will not be deemed as close contacts either.

Contacts through school will be rare.

It is only contact in social settings for prolonged periods that will now create close contacts (e.g. sleepover, visiting a friend's house, kissing, etc.). This is where we know there is a higher risk of transmission.

What to do if you have been identified as a Close Contact

who lives in the household of the positive case, OR who has been identified by Test and Protect as needing to take action:

OVER 18 YEARS 4 MONTHS

If you are over 18 years 4 months

If you are fully vaccinated (two doses, with at least 2 weeks having passed after your second dose), you should self-isolate and book a PCR test.

- If the PCR test is negative and you remain without symptoms, you can end self-isolation and go about your daily life, including returning to work or school
- If the PCR test is positive, you should continue to self-isolate in line with NHS Inform
- If you subsequently become symptomatic you should self-isolate and book a PCR test

If you are unvaccinated, have only a single dose of the vaccine, or had a second dose less than two weeks previously, you should self-isolate and book a PCR test. You should continue to self-isolate for 10 days regardless of the results of the test, in line with NHS Inform

5 YEARS – 18 YEARS 4 MONTHS

If you are aged: 5 years – 18 years 4 months

You should self-isolate and book a PCR test.

- If the PCR test is negative and you remain without symptoms, you can end self-isolation and go about your daily life, including returning to work, school or childcare
- If the PCR test is positive, you should continue to self-isolate in line with NHS guidance
- If you subsequently become symptomatic you should self-isolate and book a PCR test

IF YOU ARE UNDER 5

If you are under 5

If a close contact is aged under 5 years old then they will not need to self-isolate if they remain without symptoms.

Although a PCR test is not required for this age group before returning to usual activities (including early learning and childcare), it is encouraged. It is recognised that this will not always be possible, and parents/carers are the best judges of this

Some of the questions we have been asked:

Q. My son has had a positive LFD test. Is it only he that needs to isolate and book a test?

A All of the family now need to self-isolate until your son receives the results from a PCR test. He should book a PCR test straight away. If it is positive, the family need to book PCR tests.

Q A mother and father have tested positive. Can the child still come to nursery?

A Yes, as long as they are well and not displaying any symptoms. Children under 5 do not need to self-isolate. However, you may wish to get your child a PCR test just to confirm and help reassure staff at your child's nursery

Q In a family, a dad and son have tested positive. What does that mean for everyone else?

A Everyone in the family should book a PCR test. If the test results are positive, each member has to self-isolate for 10 days. If the results of the other family members are negative and they are without symptoms, then adults can return to work (if they have been double vaccinated for more than 14 days). Pupils are able to return to school straight away,

Q My daughter is in the class of a boy that has tested positive. Does she now have to isolate?

A No. Close contacts in school are only those who you have had 'intimate' contact with. If you have visited a friend's house to play, have dinner or go for a sleepover, then you will be identified as a close contact.

Q I have a sore head and a tickly cough. I have done a lateral flow test and it is negative. Can I go to school?

A No. A continuous cough is one of the symptoms of the Virus. You should start to isolate and book a PCR test (regardless of the result of your LFD test).