

From 1st April 2022 the guidance around COVID and testing has been amended, as was previously outlined on the COVID road map and our transition into 'Living with COVID'

Covid is now specifically referenced in the guidance around the control of infectious diseases and there is no separate COVID guidance. Section 3 related to management of infectious diseases, COVID being detailed within the section about Respiratory Infections. Section 4 of this guidance references actions to be taken should there be an 'outbreak'.

For ease, we have put the link below and copied the guidance into this document.

[Chapter 3: public health management of specific infectious diseases - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-health-management-of-specific-infectious-diseases)

Essentially – COVID will be treated as we would any other infectious illness. Staff and Children should be encouraged to stay at home if they are unwell. Where there is a positive COVID test, the timescales as below are advised:

- 5 days for staff and
- 3 days for pupils

Further to the above, children/staff with a temperature, should not return to work/school whilst they still have a temperature, but can return with mild cold symptoms and if they are otherwise well enough to be at work/school.

We would encourage caution as we move into this phase as we are aware that the number of COVID were high in some schools, in the approach to the Easter Break.

There is no longer a legal requirement for us to specifically reference COVID control measures in risk assessment but as above, we would still strongly encourage good ventilation, encouraging and enabling vaccination, frequent hand washing and robust cleaning routines etc. These are important measures to stop the spread of any potentially infectious disease. We will review this stance into the new term and considering the latest guidance around reducing the spread of respiratory infections in the workplace.

The NHS has updated new symptoms of COVID as below:

- a high temperature or shivering (chills) – a high temperature 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
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
- shortness of breath
- feeling tired or exhausted
- an aching body
- a headache
- a sore throat
- a blocked or runny nose
- loss of appetite
- diarrhoea
- feeling sick or being sick

The symptoms are very similar to symptoms of other illnesses, such as colds and flu.

Guidance for those whose immune system means they are at higher risk

Updated is available at the link below. Please refer to this and seek HR guidance if this applies to any of your staff members.

[COVID-19: guidance for people whose immune system means they are at higher risk - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk)

It is important that we are aware of who this guidance applies to so that we can consider the most appropriate management. This may include personal risk assessments and additional measures being taken in the case of outbreaks.

Ofsted

The guidance issued from the DFE on 1st April states that they are aware that some education settings are currently experiencing high levels of staff absence. Where a setting is facing acute disruption, including due to workforce absence, it can continue to request an Ofsted deferral. Ofsted will continue to look carefully and sensitively at each request and will make their decision on a case-by-case basis.

Sickness Absence Recording/Managing Sickness Absence

In line with this guidance and the legal requirement for isolation being removed, combined with no free testing and no legal requirement to test, COVID will now be reckonable in cases of sickness absence monitoring/pay calculations.

This is important as we being to treat COVID as we do other infectious illnesses and would expect staff to be both vigilant and sensible in their approach as they are now, whilst maintaining the requirement for staff to meet their contractual obligations of being in work, when they are fit and well enough to do so.

Guidance on Respiratory infections, including coronavirus (COVID-19)

Respiratory infections are common in children and young people, particularly during the winter months. Symptoms can be caused by several respiratory infections including the common cold, COVID-19, flu, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

For most children these illnesses will not be serious, and they soon recover.

Symptoms

Children with respiratory infections can experience a range of symptoms including a runny nose, high temperature, cough and sore throat.

It is not possible to tell which germ someone is infected with based on symptoms alone. Some children aged under 2 years, especially those with a heart condition or born prematurely, and very young infants, are at increased risk of hospitalisation from RSV.

Spread

Respiratory infections can spread easily between people. Sneezing, coughing, singing and talking may spread respiratory droplets from an infected person to someone close by.

Droplets from the mouth or nose may also contaminate hands, eating and drinking utensils, toys or other items and spread to those who may use or touch them, particularly if they then touch their nose or mouth.

Exclusion

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 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.

Do

Ensure that any children and young people who have a high temperature and are unwell do not attend the education or childcare setting until they no longer have a high temperature and are well enough to attend.

Encourage all children with respiratory symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when coughing and sneezing and to wash their hands after using or disposing of tissues.

Advise children or young people with a positive COVID-19 test result try to stay at home for 3 days after the day they took their test.

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.

Advise all staff and students to follow the 'Living safely with COVID-19' and other respiratory infections guidance.

You should contact your [UKHSA HPT](#) if there is:

- a 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

Update on absence recording

Schools no longer need to record pupils who do not attend for reasons related to COVID-19 using code X.