

From: DfE information <dfe.information@notifications.service.gov.uk>

Sent: 30 March 2021 15:49

To: Janet Perry <janet.perry@tameside.gov.uk>

Subject: 30 March – Coronavirus – Daily update to all early years, children’s social care, schools and further education providers

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Tameside Council. This email claims to contain information about Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Please inspect the email carefully to verify this is not a phishing email before clicking any links or opening attachments. Please exercise caution. Do you trust the person? Does the email look genuine? Were you expecting the attachment?

This message is just a reminder to remain vigilant. If in any doubt, please contact the IT Service Desk or Cyber Security Officer.



This is your daily email to keep you updated on the government’s response to coronavirus (COVID-19). If you have colleagues who would like to receive this email directly, please ask them to use this [subscription form](#).

Re-introduction of confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing for positive lateral flow device (LFD) tests at assisted testing sites

From tomorrow, NHS Test and Trace is reintroducing confirmatory PCR testing for positive LFD tests conducted at all assisted testing sites, including schools and colleges. This means that all staff, pupils and students who get a positive LFD test, whether at home or supervised at their school or college, should get a confirmatory PCR. The PCR test should be booked immediately either [online](#) or by calling 119 and should be undertaken within 2 days.

Staff, students and pupils who had a positive LFD test result, and their close contacts and other members of their household, should self-isolate immediately in line with [NHS Test and Trace guidance](#) and while awaiting the PCR result. If the PCR test is negative, it overrides the LFD test and the staff member, pupil or student can return to school or college, and their close contacts can end their self-isolation.

In January, when the prevalence of the virus in England increased, NHS Test and Trace temporarily paused the requirement to do confirmatory PCR tests for positive LFD tests that were conducted at an assisted testing site. This followed advice from PHE that, when coronavirus (COVID-19) prevalence rates are high, the performance of LFD tests and PCRs are broadly comparable and expected to be indistinguishable when used at test sites, significantly reducing the need for routine confirmatory testing.

PHE and NHS Test and Trace have kept this pause under review. As prevalence of the virus in England is now low, confirmatory PCR testing will also help to minimise the chances of false positives.

All existing protective measures set out in the [schools operational guidance](#) and [further education operational guidance](#) remain important and the need for these is not lessened. A negative PCR or LFD result should not be read as a means to relax or ignore social distancing or other virus prevention measures intended to reduce transmission – rapid testing is an additional tool that contributes to reducing risk.

To increase our preparedness and heighten our defences against new variants, NHS Test and Trace has backed new technology, known as ‘genotype assay testing’, which could halve the time it takes to identify if a positive coronavirus (COVID-19) test contains a variant of concern. This will allow positive cases to be traced sooner and stop the spread of variants in the UK. Genotype assay testing is compatible only with PCR tests. The

government has reintroduced confirmatory PCR testing for positive LFD test results in England to detect the maximum number of cases with variants. Confirmatory tests are used to validate the result of the initial rapid test.

Please see PHE's [blog on COVID-19: reintroducing confirmatory PCR testing](#) for further information.

Contact tracing over the Easter holidays

To support the NHS Test and Trace process, we have asked that staff are available for the first 6 days of the Easter holiday to fulfil necessary contact tracing responsibilities. This means that if your setting finished face-to-face education on Thursday 1 April, you should remain available for contact tracing purposes up to and including Wednesday 7 April. There is no expectation to be on-call after this point.

We have asked that staff, students, parents and carers only inform you of a positive case if either symptoms or a positive home LFD test occurred within 2 days of them being at their education setting. Where this is the case, you are asked to assist in identifying close contacts and advising self-isolation, as the individual may have been infectious whilst in their education setting.

Where symptoms or a positive home LFD test occurred more than 2 days since the person was last at their education setting, this does not need to be reported to you and contact tracing by the education setting is not required. Where this is the case, staff, students, parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.

Staff responsible for contact tracing are not asked to be on-call at all times and may designate a limited period in the day to receive notification of positive cases and advise close contacts to self-isolate (this can be done by text or email). If you would like advice or support on the action to take in response to a positive

case, please contact the DfE helpline on 0800 046 8687 and select option 1.

Attendance and provision for the year 11 and year 13 exam cohort for the 2021 summer term

Many schools usually incorporate a period of independent study leave in the summer term for year 11 and 13 pupils as exams approach. However, this year the needs of the cohort will be different, and a period of independent study leave may not be applicable.

The Department is not changing existing attendance legislation nor mandating provision.

We know that this year, many schools will already have plans in place for the last half of the summer term to support their current pupils. We strongly encourage all schools to maximise opportunities that meet the progression needs of their pupils during this period and have set out a list of valuable activities in the [schools coronavirus \(COVID-19\) operational guidance](#) (Annex B).

Updated guidance on actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

We have updated our [guidance on actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#). This includes updated information on shielding for staff and children who are clinically extremely vulnerable, twice-weekly asymptomatic testing for childminders and Test and Trace payments for parents. It also provides advice on singing for

parent and child groups, educational day visits and trips, and resuming Ofsted visits.

The information below has not changed since our last update

Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline

The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline and the PHE Advice Service (option 1) is available to answer any questions you have about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education settings and children's social care.

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours:

Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm

Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 6pm

Easter opening hours:

Friday 2 April to Monday 5 April from 10am to 4pm

Please listen carefully to all of the available options before selecting the most appropriate option for your nursery, school, college or university.

Look up your unique organisation number (UON)

If you have not received your unique organisation number (UON) for ordering new coronavirus (COVID-19) test kits you can [look it up using your unique reference number \(URN\) or your UK provider reference number \(UKPRN\)](#) or by calling the Test and Trace helpdesk on 119.

Private, voluntary and independent nurseries do not need a UON.

Department for Education guidance

Our guidance to support education providers, local authorities and parents during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak can be accessed using the links below:

- [guidance for early years and childcare providers](#)
- [guidance for schools](#)
- [guidance for special schools and other specialist settings](#)
- [guidance for further and higher education providers](#)
- [guidance for local authority children's services](#)

Unsubscribe from the daily email

You will continue to receive this daily email if you have supplied your contact information as part of your formal Department for Education establishment record (for example, in get information about schools) or you are registered as a team leader in the Test and Trace service.

If your contact information is not held formally by us, you can unsubscribe using this [unsubscribe form](#).