

Early Years and Childcare Providers Key COVID-19 Management Measures Update

Warwickshire Public Health position in relation to changes to the Government position announced 19th January 2022

We wanted to set out our local position in response to the government's decision that from **20th January 2022**, face masks in classrooms and teaching areas will not be recommended, and from **27th January** this will be extended to include face mask use in communal areas in educational settings (schools, early years).

Further, face mask use on public transport/school transport will not be mandated from 27th January 2022 but will be recommended. We support this national recommendation that **face masks should continue to be worn in enclosed and/or crowded places**, to include school transport and public transport.

As outlined in our **local guidance document**, and in line with the criteria outlined in the **DfE contingency framework**, when schools/settings have **multiple cases / outbreaks** (as many of you currently are) we will continue to recommend the following:

- that face coverings are worn in classrooms and communal areas for secondary settings (staff, pupils, visitors). This also applies to school and public transport.
- that face coverings are worn by staff and adults in communal areas and when moving around the school/setting in primary and early years settings.

We will continue to keep this position under review in light of further detail and updated guidance from the DfE and provide any further updates as we get them. We will also update our recommendations on the website

Reporting Positive Cases

Early Years and Childcare providers should continue to report positive cases as below:

1. email earlyyearsadvisors@warwickshire.gov.uk

- When you email, please confirm that you have followed **steps 2 and 3** below

2. Warwickshire County Council/Public Health [Form for reporting positive COVID-19 cases](#)

- You will need to scroll down to '**other**' at the end of the form to input your details

3. Ofsted

<https://www.report-childcare-incident.service.gov.uk/serious-incident/childcare/update-incident/>

Please see the early years and childcare COVID-19 page for links to guidance and letter templates.

<https://schools.warwickshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/early-years-childcare-settings-covid-19>

For advice and support regarding COVID-19 please email:

- earlyyearsadvisors@warwickshire.gov.uk Monday – Friday 8am – 5pm
- dphadmin@warwickshire.gov.uk evenings and weekends for support/advice with outbreaks (i.e., 2 or more linked cases)
- We may need to ask you to complete a 'case tracker' form if you do have an outbreak (we can share our own generic tracker, or we can support with analysing your own trackers – which should collect a minimum of date tested, date symptomatic, date last in setting, and room group for all of your cases).
- Education and Public Health colleagues will continue their commitment to provide advice and support, prioritising those settings with a significantly high number of cases

Isolation - *local recommendations are in italics*

- Positive cases should isolate from the day symptoms started/day of test (if no symptoms) and for the next 7 days (minimum).
- A day 5 and day 6 negative LFT test (24 hours apart) is required for de- isolation (staff/children must also be well and not have a high temperature before returning to the setting). *Settings should ask parents for the results of these tests prior to children returning. Proof is not required.*
- National guidance also indicates that individuals who deisolate prior to the end of 10 full days should limit social contact, particularly with vulnerable individuals, wear a face covering and work from home if able.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>
- *Although there has not been any update to the national definition of COVID- 19 symptoms (cough, high temperature, loss/change in taste/smell), if COVID- 19 is circulating in the school/setting please also be mindful of the wider symptoms of COVID-19 – sore throat, headache, fatigue, muscle aches, blocked/runny nose, shortness of breath, diarrhoea, and vomiting, and cold- like symptoms. Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should isolate and book a PCR test.*

Close contact testing

- When you are managing outbreaks/have met the triggers in the national DfE contingency framework, our local advice is to identify all close contacts the child/staff cases may have had in their infectious period (in groups, before and after school, transport etc.) and establish if there are links (see EY Symptoms Chart)
<https://api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-1980322935-1993>
- Notify parents/guardians that their child may have been in close contact with a positive case (see template letters) <https://schools.warwickshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/early-years-childcare-settings-covid-19>
- Notify staff that they may have been in close contact with a positive case (see template letter) <https://schools.warwickshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/early-years-childcare-settings-covid-19>
- Recommend identified close contacts take daily LFTs for 7 days (this may need to extend if transmission continues).
- Regular LFD tests are not recommended for children aged under 5. If they live with someone who has COVID-19 they are not legally required to self-isolate, but you should limit their contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19 and **arrange for them to take a PCR test as soon as possible.**
Locally, for early years settings we are recommending a PCR test for children under 5 years of age for all close contacts (not just those who are household contacts) as well as regular LFT testing (if acceptable to parents).
- When you are managing outbreaks/have met the triggers in the national DfE

contingency framework, our local advice is that *providers may wish to ask parents of children who are contacts of a positive case within the same household – i.e., the case could be a sibling or a parent, to keep their child at home until they have tested negative on a PCR, alongside undertaking daily LFTs.*

- Isolate identified close contacts who are not exempt from isolation: i.e., those who are not fully vaccinated (need to have had both vaccinations and second dose should have been more than 14 clear days prior to first exposure to cases)– *they can still be recommended to undertake daily LFT testing*, but need to remain isolated for 10 clear days after their last contact
- Daily LFT testing alongside other measures/mitigations outlined in this document and the national contingency plan, now form the key strategy in response to rapid transmission within settings.
- It is no longer necessary, and may no longer be effective, to send close contacts home (to support reducing transmission when they hit 30% of children in a group or 15% across the whole setting) unless there are significant concerns raised by the setting relating to staffing capacity. This position will be kept under review. You can of course contact the local authority on the email addresses given above (under Positive Cases) to discuss your situation.

Regular LFT testing

- We continue to strongly encourage LFT testing regularly among staff, children, and parents. *Locally we recommend this for all ages – as a minimum twice weekly.*

Face coverings

- Locally, we support the national recommendation that **face masks should continue to be worn in enclosed and/or crowded places**, to include school transport and public transport.

Reducing mixing

- Consider ways in which children can be "zoned", or how mixing (including staff) might be reduced in ways that will fit with how you are operating your setting: e.g., at lunch and break times, start and finish times. Think particularly about places people congregate, e.g., entrance areas, staff rooms/offices/meeting rooms, changing rooms etc.
- All on-site events such as open days, planned trips / educational visits should be risk assessed. *We also recommend that you continue to do this for any on- site events that would include parents.*

Ventilation

- Ensure good ventilation in all communal and room areas.

Visitors

- Be mindful about bringing others onto site, and ensure visitors take LFT tests prior to visiting, as well as wear a face covering and leave their contact details.

Vaccination

- Encourage vaccine take up among staff/parents and eligible children.

- Drop-in clinics across Coventry and Warwickshire and all vaccinations sites that you can book into in the links below:

<https://www.happyhealthylives.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccination/vaccination-drop-in-clinics/>

<https://www.happyhealthylives.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccination/vaccination-sites/>

Hand hygiene and cleaning

- Remind children and staff to wash their hands regularly and use sanitiser where possible
- Continue with regular cleaning routine and very regular cleaning down touchpoints and areas of heavy traffic:
- Please see our cleaning guidance here:

https://warwickshiregovuk-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/nadiainglis_warwickshire_gov_uk/Eb1ihgD5OZRBggtL19L_oHUBUBSO7cJaCZiBBcKwEAal0g?e=lv1zWK