

# **Advice to parents about Covid-19 in schools - FAQs**

**Bradford Council Education & Public Health**

Updated 26 August 2021

## **What is still being done to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 in schools for the start of term?**

Every school, college and childcare setting has completed an extensive risk assessment and put in place infection control measures to reduce the risk to everyone.

These measures may include:

- Children washing their hands regularly
- More regular cleaning of classrooms and the whole school
- Ensuring good ventilation in all indoor spaces
- Ensuring staff are able to take twice weekly Lateral Flow Tests to pick up on asymptomatic cases being in contact with others
- In secondary/college settings, testing all students twice, on site, before they return to school fully in September and advising them to continue taking twice weekly Lateral Flow Tests at home until further advice

## **Will children with Special Educational Needs be helped with return to school?**

Schools have been advised by Ofsted to work closely with families to support the return of pupils supported by an EHCP back into school. Some pupils with SEND (EHCP or SEN support) will need specific help and preparation for the changes to routine when they return to school. Schools will be planning to meet the needs of all children, including those with SEND and will use a range of ideas to help children settle back into school.

## **Do children have to wear a face covering?**

In Bradford District we are not currently recommending the wearing of face coverings in educational settings. This is consistent with the latest guidance from PHE and DfE on Covid-19 control.

This advice will be reviewed frequently against the numbers of cases being reported across the district and is one of the recommendations available to local public health teams to reinstate if necessary.

### **What if I don't send my child to school?**

Where a pupil is registered at a school, parents have a duty to ensure that children regularly attend.

Your child's school will want to talk to you about how they can help your child to return to school and identify any additional support you or your child may require. Schools should work with you to improve your child's attendance and alleviate any concerns you may have. Schools may consider referring parents for legal action, but only as a last resort. Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, the absence will not be penalised.

### **I am worried it's not safe to go into school. Why shouldn't I keep my child at home?**

We know that receiving face-to-face education is best for children's mental health and for their educational achievement. Serious complications from Covid-19 infection in young people remain low. The systems of protective measures that schools have been using successfully for over a year now have demonstrated that they are safe places for young people. Please contact the school directly to discuss any specific concerns you or your child may have.

### **I'm worried about my child's mental health. Where can I get some support?**

Many children and adults have struggled during this difficult period. Firstly, talk to your child's school to discuss any worries you or your child may have. Their teacher, Form Tutor or Head of Year are good persons to approach. If you are still concerned you can talk to your GP or local medical practice.

Bradford also has a wide range of organisations who can offer support, information and online services for young people like [Healthy Minds](#), [Youth in Mind](#), and [Kooth](#).

**If you, or your child, need urgent support, the Mental Health Crisis number is: 01274 221181**

## **Does my child need to go to school if someone in the household is clinically extremely vulnerable?**

Where a child is living in the household of someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, the child should continue to attend school. Please speak to your school if you have concerns. They may also be eligible for a vaccination if they are over the age of 12yrs. Please contact your local GP or local health practice for advice on this.

## **Who can I contact if I want to discuss my child's attendance?**

In the first instance you should contact your school who will be happy to answer your questions and support you with attendance. If your child has a social worker, please talk with them about attendance too.

## **What about getting to and from school?**

Pupils should walk or cycle to school if at all possible.

If using public transport, a face covering may still be required (unless they are exempt).

## **What happens if a child shows symptoms at school?**

If a child shows Covid-19 symptoms at school, then they will be sent home as soon as possible that day.

The child will be isolated while in school and looked after by a member of staff, until their parent, carer or guardian is able to collect them.

Schools are well prepared to act appropriately and have a clear plan to follow to make sure that they take swift advice and action to reduce the risk of infection spreading.

## **What happens if someone in school tests positive for the virus?**

If a pupil or staff member tests positive for Covid-19 the school will inform the Council's Education Support team. They will then provide the appropriate advice to the school. The school no longer has responsibility to identify close contacts, NHS Test and Trace will now do this. Unvaccinated adult contacts may still be asked to self-isolate for 10 days. Other contacts – adults fully vaccinated or children up to 18 years and 6 months - do not need to self-isolate; instead, they are strongly advised to take a PCR as soon as possible.

If there are a significant number of confirmed cases, PHE and our Public Health team will work with the school to agree the best course of action.

Schools are well prepared to act appropriately and have a clear plan to follow to make sure that they take swift advice and action to reduce the risk of infection spreading.

### **What if my child is told to isolate?**

If your child is contacted by NHS and identified as a contact, they are strongly advised to take a PCR test as soon as possible. They do not need to stay at home and isolate anymore.

If your child is self-isolating as a positive Covid-19 case but is well enough to access online learning, then virtual learning should be put in place by the school to support them.

### **What if I, my child or someone else in our household develops symptoms?**

- You should book a test for anyone with symptoms at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://nhs.uk/coronavirus) or by calling 119. Your child should not attend school if they have symptoms while they wait for a test result.
- If your child has a positive result, you should tell the school and your child should self-isolate for 10 days
- If your child is identified as a contact of a confirmed case by NHS Test and Trace, they do not need to self-isolate, but they should book a PCR test as soon as possible.
- Any unvaccinated adults who are identified as a contact of a confirmed case should still self-isolate for 10 days

### **Who is being tested for Covid 19 in schools?**

All staff in primary, secondary, special schools and colleges are now offered asymptomatic testing twice weekly using a Lateral Flow Device (LFD). Asymptomatic testing will help identify positive cases more quickly and break the chain of transmission.

Students in secondary schools and colleges are given testing kits to test themselves, twice weekly, at home. Schools will provide all the information and kits necessary.

Although testing is not compulsory it is strongly recommended to prevent asymptomatic people attending school and spreading the virus.

Currently, there are no plans to test children in primary and nursery school.

Parents should tell schools about the outcomes of any test whether taken at school, at home or a community testing centre.

More information on [coronavirus in children](#).

### **What happens if my child tests positive on their LFD test?**

- Report the result via the NHS app, [online](#) or by calling the phone number in the test kit's instructions.
- Contact the school.
- The child and any unvaccinated adults in the household should self-isolate and you should [book a PCR test](#) to confirm the result.
- If the PCR test is negative, self-isolation for child and any unvaccinated adults ends.
- If the PCR test is positive, the child and any unvaccinated adults must continue to self-isolate for 10 days from positive LFT.

### **What about testing in Early Years?**

The asymptomatic testing programme in education currently covers all staff at school-based nurseries and maintained nursery schools.

Home testing kits are also available to staff in all private, voluntary and independent nurseries for twice-weekly testing.

This will help to identify positive cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) more quickly and break the chains of transmission. Childminders continue to have access to community testing facilities for asymptomatic testing.

## **I have a child at a primary school, secondary school or college. Can I get a test?**

Yes. Household members of any school-age children or young people can access free Lateral Flow Device tests.

## **How do I get my test?**

You can access your test:

- through your employer if they offer testing.
- By ordering online
- Via click and collect from your local pharmacy
- From a local site.

## **My child is due to take GCSE/BTEC/A Level exams this summer. Are these still going ahead?**

Yes. The DfE have announced that they expect exams to go ahead for those due to take them next summer. The Government will make an announcement on exactly what these will look like soon.

## **My child is due to take SATs this year. What is happening?**

SATs exams are currently expected to go ahead in primary schools next summer. Further information on what these will look like is expected soon.

## **Where can I get further information?**

We encourage you to contact your school directly to discuss any specific concerns or queries.