

Dear Families,

Please find below useful information regarding the Living with COVID-19 plan.

On Monday the Prime Minister set out the next phase of the government's COVID-19 response '[Living with COVID-19](#)'. COVID-19 continues to be a virus that we learn to live with and the imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people's education remains.

Changes to testing in education and childcare settings and children's social care services
From Monday 21 February, the Government is removing the guidance for staff and students in most education and childcare settings to undertake twice-weekly asymptomatic testing.
Given we now know that the risks of severe illness from COVID-19 in most children and most fully vaccinated adults are very low, and the successful vaccination programme has achieved a high rate of take-up, the Government can remove this advice, bringing education into line with wider society.

The education testing delivery channels will remain open so that staff and students of secondary age and above can access tests if needed to respond to local public health advice, in particular in relation to outbreaks. Staff and students are also able to access test kits from their local pharmacy or [online](#).

Changes to self-isolation and daily testing of close contacts

From Thursday 24 February, the Government removed the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test. Adults and children who **test positive** will continue to be **advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least 5 full days, and then continue to follow the guidance until they have received 2 negative test results on consecutive days**. In addition, the Government will:

- No longer ask fully vaccinated close contacts and those aged under 18 to test daily for 7 days, and remove the legal requirement for close contacts who are not fully vaccinated to self-isolate.
- End self-isolation support payments, national funding for practical support and the medicine delivery service will no longer be available.
- End routine contact tracing. Contacts will no longer be required to self-isolate or advised to take daily tests. Staff, children and young people should attend their education settings as usual. This includes staff who have been in close contact within their household, unless they are able to work from home.
- End the legal obligation for individuals to tell their employers when they are required to self-isolate.

More detail can be found in the [Living with COVID-19](#) plan published on Monday.

From Friday 1 April, the Government will:

- Remove the current guidance on voluntary COVID-status certification in domestic settings and no longer recommend that certain venues use the NHS COVID Pass.
- Update guidance setting out the ongoing steps that people with COVID-19 should take to minimise contact with other people. This will align with the changes to testing.
- No longer provide free to order universal symptomatic and asymptomatic testing for the general public in England.
- Consolidate guidance to the public and businesses, in line with public health advice.

Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice on COVID-19 vaccination for healthy 5 to 11 year olds

The [NHS is currently offering](#) vaccines to at-risk children and those who live with immunosuppressed people in this age group. Parents and guardians of at risk 5 to 11 year olds should wait for the NHS to contact them, with local NHS teams already contacting those who are eligible.

On Wednesday 16 February, the government accepted [the advice](#) from the independent JCVI to make a non-urgent offer of COVID-19 vaccines to all children aged 5 to 11 in England.

The JCVI advice follows a thorough review by the UK's independent medicines regulator, the MHRA, which approved Pfizer's paediatric vaccine, as safe and effective for children aged 5 to 11.

Children without underlying health conditions are at low risk of serious illness from COVID-19 and the priority remains for the NHS to offer vaccines and boosters to older age groups and vulnerable children, as well as to catch-up with other childhood immunisation programmes.

The NHS will prepare to extend this non-urgent offer to all children during April so parents can, if they want, take up the offer to increase protection against potential future waves of COVID-19, as we learn to live with this virus.

The [updated JCVI advice for vaccinating 5 to 11 year olds](#), which was published on Friday 18 February by the NHS, confirms that community pharmacy-led local vaccination services and vaccination centres should be the primary delivery models for this cohort.

We hope that you find this information reassuring. If you have any concerns please do not hesitate to talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

Many thanks

Miss Kerry Mills
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