



Portchester Community School.

Guidance for education settings on managing COVID-19 cases from autumn term 2021

Based on information issued by the Department for Education - August 2021.

The Government's roadmap guidance on moving to Step 4 set out how restrictions have been eased across society, including in education and childcare settings.

We need to continue to proceed with caution and find the right balance between protecting public health and living with Coronavirus (COVID-19) as more of the population is vaccinated. Wherever additional measures are considered, **the objective is to maximise the number of children and young people in face-to-face teaching and minimise control measures that disrupt education, balanced against the risks of COVID-19 transmission.**

There is strong evidence that children and young people are much less susceptible to severe clinical disease than older people and that there are significant disadvantages to children and young people associated with missed education. It is of course acknowledged that this evidence may change with the emergence of new variants of concern (VoCs). The Government will continue to advise baseline measures and provide thresholds at which help can be sought and extra measures may be introduced. Local spikes in COVID-19 will usually be best managed through a dynamic risk assessment approach. Attendance restrictions are unlikely to be a proportionate response to the level of risk that COVID-19 currently poses to children and young people, and public health authorities would only consider them as a **last resort** if all other risk mitigations proved insufficient to break chains of transmission.

Baseline measures.

The DfE Operational Guidance (Secondary) sets out the measures that all education settings should have in place to manage transmission of COVID-19. This includes:

1. Students in secondary schools and colleges should be tested twice on site at an Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS) on return in the autumn term. The tests should be 3-5 days apart.
2. Thereafter, staff and students in secondary schools and colleges, should test themselves using LFD twice a week at home until the end of September, when this will be reviewed.

All early years and wraparound childcare staff should also continue to test twice weekly as they have done throughout the summer. Twice weekly testing for staff and students in HE settings will also continue until the end of September using either home test kits (LFD Collect) or an ATS. This is critical for identifying positive cases early and ensuring they isolate.

3. Those who test positive should isolate, take a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, and continue to isolate if the result is positive. **Schools and colleges will need to be prepared to implement high-quality blended learning arrangements so that any child who is well enough to learn from home can do so.**

4. Under-18s, irrespective of their vaccination status, and double vaccinated adults will not need to self-isolate if they are a close contact of a positive case. They will be strongly advised to take a PCR test and, if positive, will need to isolate. 18- year-olds will be treated in the same way as children until 6 months after their 18th birthday, to allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated.

Further guidance:

From 16 August, if you live in the same household as someone who has tested positive and are fully vaccinated or aged under 18 years and 6 months [you will not be required to self-isolate if you are a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.](#)

*From 16 August, if you are a **contact** of someone who has COVID-19 and you are fully vaccinated, or aged under 18 years 6 months, you will not be required to self-isolate.*

5. All education and childcare settings should continue to ensure good hygiene for everyone, maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, keep occupied spaces well ventilated, and follow public health advice on testing and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19. Hand sanitizing stations are in place around the school – students are too frequently directed to use them. Teaching staff have named bottles of sanitizing solutions to be used in their classroom setting between teaching sessions. Equipment is also to be cleaned between teaching sessions. Any issues with ventilation are to be reported to the site team immediately.

6. All settings should continue their strong messaging about signs and symptoms, isolation advice and testing, to support prompt isolation of suspected cases. Settings should also continue to encourage vaccination uptake for eligible students and staff

For most settings it will make sense to think about taking extra action if the number of positive cases substantially increases. This is because it could indicate transmission is happening in the setting.

The thresholds, detailed below, can be used by settings as an indication for when to seek public health advice if they are concerned. For most education and childcare settings, whichever of these thresholds is reached first:

- 5 children, pupils, students or staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period; or 19
- 10% of children, pupils, students or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period

More detailed plans are outline below.

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1. Introduction

This plan is based on the [contingency framework for managing local outbreaks](#) of COVID-19 and the [schools operational guidance](#), published by the Department for Education (DfE).

Portchester Community School will only implement some, or all, of the measures in this plan in response to recommendations provided by our local authority (LA), directors of public health (DsPH), Public Health England (PHE) health protection team or the national government.

It may be necessary to implement these measures in the following circumstances:

- To help manage a COVID-19 outbreak within the school. Actions will be considered when either of the following thresholds are met:
 - There are 5 positive cases amongst students or staff who are likely to have mixed closely within a 10-day period
 - 10% of students or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive within a 10-day period
- If COVID-19 infection rates in the community are extremely high, and other measures have failed to reduce transmission
- As part of a package of measures responding to a 'variant of concern' (VoC)
- To prevent unsustainable pressure on the NHS

2. Seeking public health advice

When one of the thresholds above is met, we will review the testing, hygiene and ventilation measures already in place.

We will also seek public health advice from a director of public health or health protection team. The Head-teacher – Mr R Carlyle will be responsible for seeking this advice, and will do so by telephoning the DfE helpline (0800 046 8687) or Hampshire County Council – our LLP

3. Testing

If recommended, we will increase the use of home testing by students and staff. If it is advised that we reintroduce an asymptomatic testing site (ATS) at our school, we will consult with the director of public health (DsPH) to discuss any further support we need to do this.

If we reintroduce on-site asymptomatic testing we will be using the same format as used during the previous arrangements. Both staff and students will be tested on site

4. Face coverings

If recommended, students, staff and visitors who are not exempt from wearing a face covering:

- Will be asked to keep on or put on a face covering when arriving at school and moving around indoors in places where social distancing is difficult to maintain, such as in communal areas

And/or:

- Will be asked to wear a face covering in classrooms or during activities, unless social distancing can be maintained or a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity

5. Shielding

We will adhere to national guidance on the reintroduction of shielding, which would apply to those on the [shielded patient list \(SPL\)](#).

We will speak to individuals required to shield about additional protective measures in school or arrangements for home working or learning.

6. Other measures

Parents, carers, students and staff will be informed promptly about the introduction of control measures. This will be done via direct email / twitter confirmation / website notification once a decision has been made.

If recommended, we will limit:

- Residential educational visits
- Open days
- Transition or taster days
- Parents coming into school
- Live performances

If recommended, we will reintroduce:

- Bubbles, to reduce mixing between groups / one ways systems / restricted movement around the school / the closure on communal areas / on-line learning

7. Attendance restrictions

Attendance restrictions will only be recommended as a last resort. If recommended, we will implement the measures in this section.

7.1 Eligibility to remain in school

If restrictions are recommended, we will stay open for:

- Vulnerable students
- Children of critical workers

7.2 Education and support for at students home

All other students will be required to stay at home and will receive remote education.

We will aim to deliver remote education that meets the same quality and quantity of education that students would receive in school, as outlined in our remote learning policy. We will return to using Microsoft Teams as our main platform for delivery.

Portchester Community School will continue to provide vouchers for students eligible for benefits-related free school meals while they are not attending school because of COVID-19 isolation guidelines. Parents will be contacted directly by a member of the finance team.

7.3 Breakfast club / after school activities.

We will limit access to before and after-school activities during term time and the summer holidays to those that need it most. We will communicate who will be eligible to attend once the restrictions are confirmed.

7.4 Safeguarding

We will review our child protection policy to make sure it reflects the local restrictions and remains effective.

We will aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site wherever possible. The DSL can always be contacted via email at anytime – j.mcmaster@portchester.hants.sch.uk

On occasions where there is no DSL or deputy on site, the Headteacher will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

When vulnerable students are absent, we will:

- › Speak to parents/carers and, where appropriate, social workers and the local authority, to work out the reason for absence
- › Encourage attendance
- › Ensure vulnerable student can access appropriate education and support while at home
- › Maintain contact, and check regularly that the student is able to access remote education provision

All actions within the plan will be taken in close liaison with our Local Authority colleagues.