



Arrangements for the start of term – September 2021 Covid-19 Lateral Flow Testing before the return to lessons

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you have managed to have a safe and peaceful summer break.

This letter contains important information about the arrangements in place to support a safe return to school following guidance issued by the Department for Education. The Department for Education requires all students to complete two Lateral Flow Tests in the first week of term.

Friday 3rd September – First test – Years 7 and 11

8:45am Year 11 students: Go straight to the Sports hall for testing / timetables / planners before starting lessons.

8:45am Year 7 students: Go straight to the Main Hall to meet with Tutors, get timetables and information. Followed by testing in the Sports Hall.

Monday 6th September – First test – Years 10 / 9 / 8 – Staggered start to the day

8:45am Years 7 and 11 – go straight to Tutor Groups. Year 8- Go straight to the Sports Hall to meet Tutors and testing.

10:00am Year 9 – arrive and go straight to the Sports Hall for testing / timetables / planners

11:45am Year 10 – arrive and go straight to the Sports Hall for testing / timetable / planners

Second tests – All Year Groups will be tested for the second time, in line with Government guidance, on Friday 10th September during a designated teaching period. Any student recording a positive test result will be directed to take a confirmatory PCR test.

Consent – Government guidance has changed from its previous position. You will only need to contact us if you **do not** wish your child to be tested. If this is the case, please email your message to office@portchester.hants.sch.uk stating your child's full name and year group.

Lateral Flow Tests – Students will be expected to test at least twice a week for the foreseeable future. We will be issuing test kits during the first week of term. Thank you in advance of your co-operation,

R Carlyle

Mr Richard Carlyle.

Headteacher.

Portchester Community School

Headteacher: Mr R Carlyle BEd (Hons)

Portchester Community School

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Information about returning to school in September 2021



Students all over the country are beginning to return to schools and colleges after their summer breaks. For many students they will be returning with far fewer restrictions than when they left for the summer holidays.

Now that there are fewer restrictions, students will be able to experience a fuller education experience, including, access to more group activities, team sports, playing with friends, plays, and taking part in musical groups.

Here's what you need to know on going back to school.

There are three key changes:

- 1. Mixing and 'bubbles'** - Keeping students in year group or classroom bubbles to reduce mixing is no longer a requirement.
- 2. Tracing close contacts** - Close contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace. Education settings are no longer expected to undertake contact tracing.
- 3. Face coverings** - Face coverings are no longer advised for students, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas.

So, what will stay the same? - Coronavirus hasn't gone away so there will still be a need for schools to follow basic measures to avoid the spread of the virus:

1. Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within schools.
2. Ensuring good hygiene including frequent and thorough hand cleaning and the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
3. Maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes.
4. Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated.
5. Following public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

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Is it true that the start of term is being delayed?

No. We're aware of misleading reports suggesting the start of term could be delayed by schools. This is not the case. We will be operating a staggered start to support the initial testing of all students on their return to school.

Our priority is to ensure settings are able to deliver high-quality, face-to-face education to all pupils.

But what if there are a number of cases in one school?

If there are a number of cases in one school, there is advice in place so that we will know what to do. We will do everything they can to minimise the impact on education and attendance, so might decide to introduce measures like:

- Increased testing
- Temporarily reintroducing face coverings and;
- Restricting attendance as a short-term measure and only as a last resort.

More information on the guidance we have issued to education settings is available on our website: [Contingency framework: education and childcare settings](#).

What if someone tests positive or has symptoms? Do they need to isolate?

Self-isolate straight away and get a [PCR test \(a test that is sent to the lab\) on GOV.UK](#) as soon as possible if you have any of these 3 symptoms of COVID-19, even if they are mild:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

You should also self-isolate straight away if:

- you've tested positive for COVID-19 either according to a PCR test or a lateral flow device test – this means you have the virus. If you get a positive LFD test you should book a PCR test. A negative PCR test will override a positive LFD test.
- someone you live with has symptoms or tested positive (unless you are not required to self-isolate – see below if this applies to you)
- you've been told to self-isolate following contact with someone who tested positive – [find out what to do if you're told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app](#).

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Students should only self-isolate if they have symptoms or if they get a positive PCR or Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test.

If they develop symptoms or get a positive LFD test they should book a PCR test. A positive PCR test cannot be overridden. If a student is asked to get a PCR test as a result of contact with a positive case they may continue to attend education until they get the result of their PCR back.

And what will happen for people who have been in contact with positive cases?

Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons.

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. They do not need to isolate while awaiting the PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Staff who do not need to isolate, and children and young people aged under 18 years 6 months who usually attend school, and have been identified as a close contact, should continue to attend school as normal.

If none of the above applies, people should self-isolate [as per the instructions from NHS Test and Trace](#).

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