**Key COVID-19 Management Measures for January 2022**

**Updated 4/01/2022**

**This guidance is applicable to all Schools and Post-16 settings. There is specific guidance for Early Years Settings.**

**Schools and settings with a specific query about their situation should contact:**

[**dphadmin@warwickshire.gov.uk**](mailto:dphadmin@warwickshire.gov.uk) **or**

**education-corona@warwickshire.gov.uk**

Following updated national guidance, linked to the latest Omicron variant and wave; Education and Public Health have updated the previous advice related to COVID-19 management for the forthcoming half term. This advice will be reviewed alongside national guidance review points, the first being 26th January 2022.

The Omicron variant is highly transmissible and case numbers are doubling every one and a half to two days. Although the rate of transmission is having a significant impact on the NHS in terms of admissions, emerging evidence suggests that overall people are experiencing milder illnesses; however, the rate of transmission is still of concern for those that experience more serious complications. We have taken this into account in our updated advice below. *Any local advice/recommendation is in italics.*

We continue to support all schools/settings who choose to keep certain COVID-19 mitigations in place (e.g. staggered start and finish times, zoning of classes, age groups etc). We would also strongly advise reviewing your risk assessments for vulnerable staff and children.

**Positive Cases**

* *We would ask schools to kindly continue to complete the DfE Daily Education Settings Status form, which we will use to collate important data, which will allow us to risk assess and support our proactive work with schools.*
* *In addition, we would ask schools to please come to us on education-corona@warwickshire.gov.uk and early years settings to earlyyearsadvisors@warwickshire.gov.uk (these inboxes are operated during working hours in the week), or dphadmin@warwickshire.gov.uk at 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, data symptomatic, date last in setting, and year 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*
* *Positive cases should isolate from the day symptoms started/day of test (if no symptoms) and for the next 7 days (minimum).*
* *A day 6 and day 7 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 school/the setting). Schools/settings should ask parents for the results of those tests prior to children returning.*
* 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
* *It is recommended that due to the increased vulnerability of some pupils in special schools, specifically those who have complex learning disabilities and/or medical needs cases, cases should isolate for the full 10 days. This is in recognition of the difficulty pupils may have in taking COVID-19 tests but also the clinical vulnerability of some of these cohorts. .*
* *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**

* Identify all close contacts the child/staff cases may have had in their infectious period (in class, break and lunch times, before and after school and transport) and establish if there are links (see schools/EY flowchart provided)
* Notify parents/guardians that their child may have been in close contact with a positive case (see template letters provided)
* Notify staff that they may have been in close contact with a positive case (see template letter provided)
* Recommend identified close contacts take daily LFTs for 7 days (this may need to extend if transmission continues). *For early years settings we are recommending a PCR test for close contacts as well as regular LFT testing (if acceptable to parents). If daily LFT testing is not possible for some special school cohorts we would advise as a minimum a PCR test and any additional LFT testing that they can undertake*.
* *We will also support headteachers/managers who choose 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 school.
* 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 class / 15% in a year) unless there are significant concerns raised by the school/setting relating to staffing capacity, or there is a need to protect specific groups of vulnerable learners in a special school, or equivalent specialist setting. This position will be kept under review. You can of course contact the authority on the email addresses given above (under Positive Cases) to discuss your situation.
* DFE guidance is clear that schools and settings should remain open wherever possible. Leaders should only move to remote learning as a last resort and will therefore need to risk assess considering the following factors:
  + Safety of pupils and staff
  + Staffing availability
  + Size of school and layout

**Regular LFT testing**

* In addition to the onsite LFT testing for secondary age pupils on return to school, 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.*
* Please be aware that LA have limited supplies of LFT tests and it is advised schools use other methods of obtaining tests wherever possible.

**Face coverings**

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

**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 school/setting:  e.g. assemblies, at lunch and break times, start and finish times. Think particularly about places people congregate, e.g. foyers, locker areas, staff rooms/offices/meeting rooms, changing rooms etc.
* All sports fixtures, 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 classroom areas.
* Please contact [dphadmin@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:dphadmin@warwickshire.gov.uk) if you have not as yet had your ventilation assessment (Schools with secondary age pupils) or wish to request funding for some of the measures identified. Primary schools to please also contact us if they have not received/need advice on their ventilation units.
* Schools may also wish to consider the DfE advice and scheme below:
* The Department for Education (DfE) will make up to 7,000 more air cleaning units available for poorly ventilated teaching spaces in state funded education settings, where quick fixes to improve ventilation are not possible. This is in addition to the 1,000 DfE funded air cleaning units previously announced for SEND and alternative provision settings, and the 350,000 CO2 monitors already delivered to settings.
* All state funded primary and secondary schools, further education colleges and early years settings can apply for a funded air cleaning unit if they meet strict eligibility criteria. Special and alternative provision settings, including SEND units attached to mainstream schools, that were not successful or did not apply during the first round are also eligible to apply during this round.
* Further details, including the eligibility criteria, can be found in the [guidance on applying for an air cleaning unit.](https://coventrycc.sharepoint.com/teams/People/EduLibAdLearning/EIS/EduEnt0-19-25/Documents/COVID-19%20schools/guidance%20on%20applying%20for%20an%20air%20cleaning%20unit.)
* Applications for all settings will close at 9am on Monday 17 January.
* If your setting is not eligible for a funded unit, the [air cleaning marketplace remains open](https://find-dfe-approved-framework.service.gov.uk/list/air-cleaning?utm_source=2%20January%202022%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19), enabling you to purchase units at a suitable specification and competitive price

**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.
* CWPT immunisation team will be visiting schools over the first half term to deliver the 2nd vaccination for age 12-15.
* 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-drop-in-clinics/)

[*https://www.happyhealthylives.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccination/vaccination-sites/*](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/Eb1ihgD5OZRBgbtL19L_oHUBUBSO7cJaCZiBBcKwEAal0g?e=Iv1zWK>