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Sent: 08 December 2020 14:14

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Subject: 8 December – Coronavirus – Daily update to all early years, children’s social care, schools and further education providers

Department for Education

This is your daily email to keep you updated on the government’s response to coronavirus (COVID-19).

End of term planning

We know that school and further education leaders, teachers and staff, as well as nurseries and childminders, have worked tirelessly over the last term. This has included their important role in contact tracing, to help in the national effort to limit the spread of the virus. We are aware that this has led to additional work over weekends and holidays and we are incredibly grateful for this.

We recognise the challenges of this responsibility at the end of term. Public Health England has agreed a 6 day window after the final day of teaching in which schools and further education providers are asked to remain contactable so they can assist with contact tracing where necessary. This will allow enough time for positive coronavirus (COVID-19) cases to be identified and confirmed by a test and for relevant contacts in the education setting to be traced. We are clear that beyond 6 days after the final day of teaching, school and further education staff are not asked to play a role in any contact tracing. It is also likely that the need to support the tracing process will reduce dramatically over the course of the 6 days as the majority of cases should be identified earlier in the week.

End of term – advice for schools

To ensure that staff get the time off they need and deserve, schools may wish to use an INSET day, making Friday 18 December a non-teaching day and using the day for staff training, which could be

delivered online. Where term would normally finish in the week commencing 21 December, schools may wish to consider adjusting term dates to make Friday 18 December the last day of term (which could be an INSET day) and bringing forward the start of term in January by the same number of days.

In all circumstances, teaching time must be made up at another point in the academic year. You should not limit attendance at school before Friday 18 December. It remains vital for all children to be in school up to the last day of teaching.

We recognise this communication has arrived with schools late in the term but would ask schools to be as helpful to parents as they can by sharing any changes to end of term arrangements as soon as possible, particularly where schools choose to make Friday 18 December a non-teaching day. Your support with this is appreciated.

We recommend all schools ensure staff, parents and carers are aware of the following information and relevant arrangements regarding positive cases in the holidays:

- Where a pupil or staff member tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, the school should not be contacted. Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.
- For the first 6 days after teaching ends, if a pupil or staff member tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms within 48 hours of being in school, the school is asked to assist in identifying close contacts and advising self-isolation, as the individual may have been infectious whilst in school.
- School staff are not asked to remain on-call or conduct any contact tracing more than 6 days after the final day of teaching. Where a schools last teaching day is on Thursday 17 December, there should be no pupil contact tracing asks beyond Wednesday 23 December.

For the first 6 days after the end of term, schools are not asked to be on-call at all times. Staff responsible for contact tracing may designate a limited period in the day to receive notification of positive cases and advise close contacts to self-isolate (this can be done by text or email). The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline and PHE advice service are available to support with any queries you have about positive cases in your school.

Where pupils are required to self-isolate due to contact with a positive case after the first 6 days following the end of term, schools do not need to be informed about their absence until the first day of the new term.

End of term – advice for further education providers

We advise that, where possible, all face to face teaching ends on Thursday 17 December, which would give a cut-off date of 23 December. After 23 December, further education providers will not be contacted by NHS Test and Trace for contact tracing.

Further education providers already have flexibility to determine term dates and decide how to deliver planned hours across the study programme, which will allow face to face teaching to end by 17 December. We know that further education providers appreciate the importance of on-site teaching for young people. This change does not diminish our view that colleges should continue to maximise access to face to face teaching, supplemented by some remote education.

Funding for further education programmes is based on their size and measured in planned hours or learning aims. It is not determined by term dates as it is for schools, and this allows providers flexibility on how planned hours are delivered. If the amount of face to face planned hours for students are reduced before the end of term, we expect that additional face to face planned hours will be provided before the end of the study programme.

We recommend all further education providers ensure staff, students, parents and carers are aware of the following information and relevant arrangements regarding positive cases in the holidays:

- Where a student or staff member tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being on site, you should not be contacted. Students should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.
- Staff, students, parents, and carers only need to inform further education providers of a positive case where symptoms occur within 48 hours of the confirmed case being on site. Leaders will need to help identify close contacts and advise them to self-isolate.
- Staff do not need to be available for contact tracing duties beyond the first 6 days of the end of term, at which point all positive cases should be dealt with through NHS Test and Trace. This means that where a provider ends face to face education on Thursday 17 December, there will be no need to remain on-call after Wednesday 23 December.

For the first 6 days after the end of term, further education providers are not asked to be on-call at all times. Staff responsible for contact tracing may designate a limited period in the day to receive notification of positive cases and advise close contacts to self-isolate (this can be done by text or email). The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline and PHE advice service are available to support with any queries you have about positive cases in your college.

Festive break – advice for early years providers

We know that many nurseries and childminders will continue to operate over the holiday period, providing invaluable support to parents who still require childcare during this time. Private, voluntary and independent providers, and maintained nursery schools can continue to open during the period and should continue to follow the

guidance for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

School-based nurseries that only open during term-time should follow the arrangements for their school.

Updated guidance for parents and carers

We have updated our guidance on what [parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) to include information on Ofsted inspections from January 2021.

We have also provided information on the arrangements for GCSE and A level exams in summer 2021, entry tests for selective schools, and assessments in primary and junior schools.

Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline – holiday hours

The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline and the PHE Advice Service (option 1) will be available over the holidays to answer any questions you have about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education settings and children's social care. These helplines will, however, close on the bank holidays, and have shortened opening hours on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours:

24 December – 8am to 4pm

25 to 28 December – Closed

29 to 30 December – 8am to 6pm

31 December – 9am to 4pm

1 January – Closed

2 to 3 January – 10am to 6pm

Until 24 December, the helpline opening hours are:

Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm

Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 6pm

Please listen carefully to all of the available options before selecting the most appropriate option for your nursery, school, college or university.

Please select option 1 or 2 if you require specific advice on the action to take to respond to a positive case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in your setting. This option will take you through to a dedicated team of NHS Business Services Authority advisors who will work through a risk assessment with you to identify close contacts and will inform you what action is needed based on the latest public health advice.

Please select option 3 or 4 for any other questions about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education settings and children's social care.

The information below has not changed since our last update

Look up your unique organisation number (UON)

If you have not received your unique organisation number (UON) for ordering new coronavirus (COVID-19) test kits you can [look it up using your unique reference number \(URN\) or your UK provider reference number \(UKPRN\)](#) or by calling the Test and Trace helpdesk on 119.

Department for Education guidance

Our guidance to support education providers, local authorities and parents during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak can be accessed using the links below:

- [Guidance for early years and childcare providers](#)

- [Guidance for schools](#)
- [Guidance for further and higher education providers](#)
- [Guidance for local authority children's services](#)
- [Guidance for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings](#)