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Learning to live safely with COVID-19: Guidance for parents and carers

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for continuing to support the national and local COVID-19 control measures and for helping to keep staff, children, and young people in childcare and education settings safe.

Although infection rates are still high, the number of new cases of COVID-19 is dropping in all districts across Cumbria. Case rates are also decreasing in children.

On Monday 21 February the Prime Minister set out the next phase of the government's COVID-19 response; '[Living with COVID-19](#)'. As such, there have been significant changes to the national guidance for people with COVID-19 and their contacts. These changes, and what they mean for childcare and education settings, are outlined below. Please note that this guidance may change again after the end of March. Further details can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-people-with-covid-19-and-their-contacts>

- Staff and students in most education and childcare settings are no longer advised to undertake twice-weekly lateral flow device (LFD) tests. However, in the event of an outbreak, staff and students may be asked to carry out LFD testing for a limited time. [Free LFD tests](#) continue to be available to the public until the end of March 2022. Staff and students in a small number of settings (such as special educational needs settings) may still be advised to continue twice-weekly testing.
- Adults and children who develop one or more of the 3 main symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a change in taste or smell) are still advised to get a PCR test and stay at home until the result is known. [Free PCR testing](#) continues to be available until the end of March 2022.
- From Thursday 24 February, there is no longer a *legal requirement* to self-isolate following a positive COVID-19 test result. However, because COVID-19 is still circulating at quite a high level and can still be a threat to more vulnerable people, the *public health advice* has not changed. Therefore, adults and children who test positive are still advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people. They can choose to start daily LFD testing 5 days after their symptoms start (or 5 days following a positive test result if they have no symptoms). Once a person has two negative LFD test results (taken on consecutive days), or they complete 10 full days of staying at home (whichever comes first), they can return to their education setting if they feel well enough to do so and they do not have a high temperature. Further details are available in the national guidance at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-people-with-covid-19-and-their-contacts>.
- Note that education and childcare settings are responsible for protecting the health and wellbeing of those who attend or visit them. As such, settings can take the decision to refuse entry to a child who has tested positive, or is showing symptoms of COVID-19 if, in their reasonable judgement, it is deemed necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection. Their decision would take into account all the circumstances and current public health advice.
- Adults and children who are a close contact of someone with COVID-19 are no longer required to self-isolate or take daily LFD tests. Children and young people who usually attend an education or

childcare setting and who live with someone who has COVID-19 can continue to attend the setting as normal.

In line with these changes, and the improving situation across Cumbria, we have withdrawn our local enhanced guidance for household contacts of positive cases. This means that as of Thursday 24 February:

- Children under the age of 5, who live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, are no longer advised to stay at home for 5 days.
- Children in primary schools, who live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, are no longer advised to stay at home for 5 days and do a PCR test, or to take daily LFD tests.

It is still important that we all continue to follow the national guidance and keep each other safe. Further information about how to do this is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>. We also recommend anyone eligible in your household gets any recommended doses of the [COVID-19 vaccine](#) if they have not done so already.

Thank you again for your support.

Yours Sincerely,



Colin Cox
Director of Public Health
Cumbria County Council