

April 2022

Dear students, parents and carers,

From 1 April, government guidance in relation to COVID changed, as part of *Living with Covid* arrangements. These changes have significant implications in relation to access to PCR and lateral flow testing, self-isolation arrangements, and access to remote learning. Please could we encourage you to take a few minutes to read through the updated information below.

Should students be using lateral flow tests or PCR tests?

Most people in England are no longer advised to get tested

Lateral flow tests are no longer available from college. Free NHS PCR tests are no longer routinely available. Twice weekly lateral flow testing is no longer recommended and students are **not** expected to carry out a LFT if they feel unwell or have covid symptoms.

There are a small number of people who will still be able to get free COVID-19 tests from the NHS:

- If you have a health condition which means you're eligible for new COVID-19 treatments
- If you're going into hospital for surgery or a procedure
- If you work in the NHS or in social care

What if students have covid symptoms or feel unwell?

Students are not expected to take a lateral flow test and in most cases will not be able to get a PCR test. The emphasis now is on whether students feel well enough to attend college, provided that they do not have a high temperature.

- If a student has a minor illness and does still feel well enough to attend college, they should continue to attend college provided that they do not have a high temperature.
- If a student is **not well enough to attend** college they should remain at home. They should return to college as soon as they feel well enough to, provided that they **no longer have a high temperature**. Please notify college of absence in the normal way.

What if a student has a positive COVID test

Most people in England are no longer advised to get tested so there should be very few situations in which this occurs

- If a student is **under 18 years old** and **tests positive for COVID-19** they should stay at home and avoid contact with other people for **3 days** from the start of their **symptoms**. After this they should return to college if they are **well enough to attend** and **no longer have a high temperature**. Students should no longer carry out lateral flow tests to release from self-isolation.
- If a student is **over 18 years old** and **tests positive for COVID-19** they should stay at home and avoid contact with other people for **5 days** from the start of their **symptoms**. After this they should return to college if they are **well enough to attend** and **no longer have a high temperature**. Students should no longer carry out lateral flow tests to release from self-isolation.

Students will be asked to provide evidence of a positive lateral flow test by recording it on the NHS site and sending a screenshot to their progress tutor, as previously. Positive tests should be extremely rare as students are no longer advised to get tested and there is no expectation to do so even if they have symptoms or feel unwell. The emphasis is no longer on testing, but on whether a student feels well enough to attend college, provided that they do not have a high temperature.

Can students with COVID access remote learning?

If a student is too unwell to attend college they should not be accessing remote learning in the interests of their health and wellbeing.

If a student is too unwell to attend college they should focus on rest and recovery, and talk to their teachers about missed work when they are well enough to return to college.

If a student has tested positive and we have seen evidence, but feels well enough to access remote learning, they may do so for the time being by discussing their situation with their progress tutor, and then contacting their teachers. However, this should be extremely rare as students are no longer advised to get tested. If a student has only mild illness and feels well enough to attend college they should do so provided that they do not have a high temperature, and they do not need to carry out a COVID test.

Any access to remote learning is unlikely to be provided beyond the short term and will be kept under review, due to the significant reduction in self-isolation periods from the original 10 days and the new arrangements in place.

Should students wear face coverings?

Face coverings are no longer required in college. Students may choose to wear face coverings on corridors and communal areas if they wish and the government advises that they are useful in crowded and enclosed spaces where you may come into contact with people you do not normally meet.

We discourage the use of face coverings in lessons in the interest of effective communication and learning.

Changes to the COVID arrangements are based on information from:

- COVID-19 Response : Living with COVID (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19>)
- DfE Information email (31st March – Update to all education and childcare settings and providers)
- SFCA 'Living with COVID update'
- NHS website 'Changes to testing for coronavirus (COVID-19) in England' (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/get-tested-for-coronavirus/>)

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.



Vicky Marks, Principal