

Guidance

## Further education COVID-19 operational guidance

Updated 2 December 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision/further-education-covid-19-operational-guidance#tracing>

Close contacts will be identified via **NHS Test and Trace** and education settings are **not** expected to undertake contact tracing.

### Tracing close contacts and isolation

As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case to identify close contacts. Contacts from a setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact. You may be contacted in exceptional cases to help with identifying close contacts, as currently happens in managing other infectious diseases.

All individuals who have been identified as a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, irrespective of vaccination status and age, will be contacted directly and required to self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test. They will be informed by the local health protection team or NHS Test and Trace if they fall into this category and provided details about self-isolation.

Further actions for educational settings may be advised by a local Incident Management Team (IMT) investigating a confirmed or suspected case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

For everyone else, isolation rules are unchanged. Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 that has not been identified as the Omicron variant, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19 that is not the Omicron variant, and any of the following apply:

- they're fully vaccinated
- they're below the age of 18 years 6 months
- they've taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they're 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](#). We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Adults who do not need to isolate and young people aged under 18 years 6 months who usually attend an education or childcare setting, and have been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19 that has not been identified as the Omicron variant, should continue to attend the setting as normal.

18-year-olds will be treated in the same way as children until 6 months after their 18th birthday, to allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated. At which point, they will be subject to the same rules as adults and so if they choose not to get vaccinated, they will need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact.

You will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is an outbreak in a setting or if central government offers the area an enhanced response package, a director of public health might advise a setting to temporarily reintroduce some additional control measures.