



(School name and address)

If you telephone please ask for
Your ref

Public Health Team
0151 511 5200

Date

27 August 2021

E-mail address

public.health@halton.gov.uk

Dear Parents and Carers

We are writing to explain the changes to national policies on COVID-19 self-isolation and testing in schools, and to provide information on how COVID-19 will be managed in schools this term. This letter also explains what you should do if your child gets COVID-19 or is a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

Whilst we continue to manage COVID-19 in our communities, as a local authority we aim to do all we can to make sure all children in Halton can keep going to school with minimal disruption to their learning this term. This is especially important as we move into the Autumn term and also see more coughs, colds and other winter bugs. We all have a part to play and we are grateful for your continuing support.

CHANGES TO NATIONAL SELF-ISOLATION GUIDANCE

From 16th August, people who are under 18 years and 6 months, *or* who are fully vaccinated, will no longer legally need to isolate if they are a close contact of someone with COVID-19. Instead, you are advised (but not legally required) to get a PCR test, unless they have had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days.

However, anyone (regardless of age or vaccination status) who develops any of the three main COVID-19 symptoms ((high temperature, new continuous cough, loss of or change in normal sense of taste or smell) must get a PCR test as soon as possible, and isolate until the result is available. People who get a positive PCR test must then continue to isolate as usual.

PLANS FOR COVID-19 TESTING IN SCHOOLS AND AT HOME

Secondary Schools

All secondary school pupils (Year 7 and above) should receive 2 on-site (in-school) lateral flow device tests, 3 to 5 days apart, on their return at the start of the Autumn term.

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Secondary school pupils should then continue to take lateral flow (LFD) tests **at home, twice per week until the end of September**. This will then be reviewed. Schools will provide packs of LFD tests for pupils to take home.

By making sure your child correctly carries out the lateral flow tests twice a week, it will help us to spot and stop the spread of COVID-19 amongst pupils - protecting each other and preventing disruption to your child's education. This testing will also be important to help us to know if children have COVID-19, a cough/cold or other bugs. Please **see below** for what to do if your child has a positive LFD test.

We will provide further details in due course on whether testing will continue beyond September.

Nursery and primary school pupils are not asked to test at this time.

WHAT TO DO IF.....

What should I do if my child develops COVID-19 symptoms?

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- new continuous cough and/or
- fever (temperature of 37.8°C or higher)
- loss of or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

If your child develops any of these symptoms, you must arrange for them to have a PCR test as soon as possible. A PCR test can be arranged via the www.nhs.uk website, through <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by phoning 119 (NHS Test & Trace) if you do not have internet access. **Please see below for information on local test centres.**

ACCESSING PCR COVID-19 TESTING IN HALTON

Testing for people with COVID-19 symptoms and close contacts:

PCR tests are available 7 days a week, from 8am – 8pm, at:

- *Heath Business and Technical Park Weston, Runcorn, WA7 4QX*
- *Brindley Car Park (behind St Paul's Health Centre), Runcorn, WA7 1AQ*
- *Old Police Station/Magistrates Kingsway, Widnes, WA8 7QJ*
- *John Lennon Airport Speke, Liverpool, L24 1YD*
- *Mobile testing sites*

Please pre-book tests at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. PCR tests for home delivery can also be ordered by phoning 119.



If your child has any of the above COVID-19 symptoms, they should self-isolate immediately and should not attend school or nursery. Please phone the school/nursery to tell them that your child has COVID-19 symptoms and you are waiting for a COVID-19 PCR test result.

What should I do if my child's COVID-19 PCR test has come back positive?

Anyone with a positive COVID-19 PCR test result should self-isolate until the latest of:

- 10 days after the start of their symptoms, or
- 10 days after their test day if they are asymptomatic

Self-isolation means your child should not go to school/nursery, attend any out-of-school activities or visit a friend's house. They should not visit any public places, use public transport or go out to exercise. You should not have visitors into the home except for those providing essential care.

Please phone the school/nursery and tell them your child has a positive COVID-19 PCR test result. It is really important you let schools know if your child has COVID-19, so we can monitor the number of children with COVID-19 across the school.

What should I do if my child is a contact of someone with COVID-19?

If your child is aged under 18 years and 6 months and does not have any symptoms of COVID-19 (high temperature, new continuous cough, loss of or change in normal sense of taste or smell), they do not have to self-isolate as a contact of COVID-19. They are advised to have a PCR test unless they have had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days.

Children aged 5 and under do not need to take a PCR test unless they live with the person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

What should I do if my child has a positive result on a lateral flow device (LFD) test?

If your child has a positive result on a lateral flow device test, they should self-isolate immediately and you should arrange a PCR test as soon as possible.

Other people who live in the same house do not need to self-isolate whilst you wait for the PCR test result, as long as they do not have symptoms and are aged under 18 years and 6 months or are fully vaccinated.

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What should I do if my child is unwell but doesn't have COVID-19 symptoms?

Your child should not go to school/nursery if they are unwell. If you are worried, speak to your GP or a pharmacist, who will be able to advise you how long your child should stay off school/nursery. Otherwise we would recommend they stay at home for 48 hours or until the child is well. At the moment children do not need to get a PCR test if they do not have any of the three main symptoms of COVID-19.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Your school and Halton Borough Council will work together to keep you updated throughout the term, as needed. More information and advice can also be found on your school's website and Halton Borough Council website (www.halton.gov.uk).

I hope you keep safe and well and I thank you again for continuing to support the battle against COVID 19 in Halton.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Vasic'.

Mil Vasic
Strategic Director, People