

Thursday 24 February 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to advise you of the changes to Government Covid-19 guidance which come into place from Thursday 24 February 2022.

Whilst we are now learning to [live with COVID-19](#), it is important to remember that the global pandemic is not yet over. However, the Government have stated that vaccines have enabled the gradual and safe removal of restrictions on everyday life over the past year and will remain at the heart of their approach to living with the virus in the future.

On Monday 21st February 2022, the Prime Minister announced the following:

Testing:

Regular asymptomatic testing has helped to reduce transmission in education and childcare settings and maintain face-to-face education and care. However, it has also placed a burden on teachers, parents, pupils and students throughout the pandemic.

The Government has announced therefore that it is in a position to lift this guidance for staff and students in most education and childcare settings, allowing pupils and students across the country to focus on their education. This guidance was lifted as of Tuesday 22 February 2022.

However, staff and pupils of secondary age and above in specialist SEND settings, Alternative Provision, and SEND units within mainstream schools are advised to continue regular twice weekly testing. Staff and students are able to access test kits from their local pharmacy or [online](#).

The Legal Duty to Self-Isolate:

As of Thursday 24 February 2022, the Government has removed the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test.

Adults and children who test positive will continue **to be advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least 5 full days** and then continue to follow the

guidance until they have received 2 negative test results on consecutive days or until the 10th day.

Fully vaccinated close contacts and those aged under 18 will no longer be required to test daily for 7 days, and the legal requirement for close contacts who are not fully vaccinated to self-isolate has been removed.

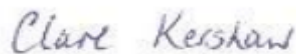
Routine contact tracing will end. Contacts will no longer be required to self-isolate or advised to take daily tests.

Free testing will end from 1st April 2022 for the general public, including those with symptoms. However, the Government will continue to provide free tests for symptomatic people for the oldest age groups, and those who are most vulnerable.

I would like to remind you that school attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age, and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school. Therefore, your child should be attending school unless they are not well enough to attend or they test positive for Covid 19 – see guidance above.

Thank you once again for all for the support that you continue to provide in supporting your child's education, which remains paramount at this time.

With best wishes



Clare Kershaw
Director of Education
Essex County Council