

Children and young people across Liverpool will be returning to classrooms from Wednesday, 1 September.

As well as excitement, after the upheaval of the last 18 months there may also be some confusion and anxiety about what current Covid guidance means for the new school year.

Schools have been communicating directly with families and carers and keeping their individual websites updated and should always be the first place to go for advice about plans for getting back into the classroom.

However, we have put together the following frequently asked questions to answer some of the general questions about going back to school...

### **How do the [self-isolation changes of 16 August](#) affect school attendance?**

If children and young people (aged 18 years & 6 months and under) have not tested positive for Covid, and they are not otherwise ill they are expected to be in school.

Anyone aged under 18 and 6 months who has been a close contact of someone who has tested positive is no longer required to self-isolate unless the child also has symptoms. They are advised to take a PCR test but they do not have to isolate whilst they wait for the results.

Students who are aged 18 years & 6 months and over will be treated as adults under the guidance and will not be expected to self-isolate if they have had a close contact provided they have received both Covid vaccinations and 14 days have passed since the second dose.

You can find out where drop-in Covid vaccination clinics are on [Liverpool CCG's website](#).

### **I think my child has Covid, what should I do?**

If your child has symptoms, [please book a PCR test](#) and isolate until you have the results. If you receive a positive test result the child should self-isolate following the national guidance. If you need support whilst your family is self-isolating there is information on the [council's website](#).

### **Will children still be expected to take lateral flow tests (LFTs)?**

Testing is voluntary, but it is encouraged as it is still one of the best ways to break the chain of infection.

We're encouraging secondary school pupils to take an LFT **before** they return to school.

When schools return, government guidance will be followed:

- **Nursery and primary school children** – Do not need to take LFTs.

- **Secondary school pupils and college students** – In the first week of term, two LFTs will be taken at school three to five days apart. In following weeks, two LFTs to be taken at home each week until the end of September.

### **Will testing continue after the end of September?**

There will be a national review of all testing in September 2021 and this will inform the role of testing in school and other settings.

### **What should I do if my child has a positive result on a lateral flow test?**

They should self-isolate immediately and you should arrange a PCR test as soon as possible. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

Other members of the household do not need to self-isolate whilst you await the PCR test result if they do not have symptoms and are aged under 18 years or are fully vaccinated.

### **Will pupils still be part of bubbles?**

Bubbles were introduced to limit contact between groups. Schools are no longer required to do this, but they may be considered if there is an outbreak at the school.

### **What happens if there are positive cases in schools?**

All schools and colleges are required to have outbreak management plans. Action may need to be taken if certain thresholds are met. If risks change significantly the Director of Public Health is able to implement further or different measures to protect population health.

### **Will school continue to inform us if there are positive cases in school?**

Public Health England are currently advising schools that it is not necessary to send *warn and inform* letters for each pupil case. Parents will be informed if additional controls from the outbreak management plan need to be put in place.

Meanwhile schools will continue to maintain COVID prevention measures. This includes maximising ventilation, encouraging good hygiene, thorough cleaning and ensuring that anyone with COVID symptoms or positive test results do not come in to school.

### **Will children be made to have a vaccination?**

No-one will be made to have a vaccination, but having both doses of the vaccination is still the best way of preventing people from becoming very ill with Covid-19.

The national vaccination programme is now open to anyone aged 16 and over. Sixteen and 17-year-olds will be contacted by their GPs and are not able to book vaccinations online.

**I would like my child to have a vaccination as there is someone in my household who is vulnerable but my child is younger than 16.**

Vaccinations are being offered to 12-15- year-olds if they have an underlying health condition or if someone they live with is immunosuppressed. You should speak to your child's GP.

**Will my child have to wear a face covering in the classroom?**

Guidance states that face coverings do not need to be worn in the classroom. But if your child travels to school or college on public transport that is crowded and they can't socially distance it is a good idea to wear a face covering if they are able.

Parents are encouraged to wear face coverings at the school gates particularly if social distancing isn't possible.

**Will normal school activities now be taking place?**

Yes, activities such as sports, singing, playing wind or brass instruments, and going on trips and excursions are now allowed to take place.

**My child is anxious about returning to school is there any support?**

The last year and a half has been especially tough for our children and young people. If your child is worried about returning to the classroom please speak to the school in the first instance. They can also get help and advice online such as at [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)