



Going back to school

September 2021



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You've done an amazing job of coping with the changes over the last 18 months. We have spoken to thousands of children about how they feel about going back to school. You have told us that you have missed school and you are excited to go back.

This guide will tell you what to expect so you can feel confident about returning and ready to enjoy the new school year!

Is it safe to go to school?

Children are at very low risk of becoming ill from coronavirus.

The virus hasn't gone away, but because lots of people are vaccinated, the Government has decided it's time to relax some of the restrictions in schools.

The main changes are:

- You won't have to wear masks unless your school asks you to. If you catch a bus or train to school then you are advised to wear a mask during your journey.
- You won't be taught in bubbles or have breaks at different times.
- You won't need to self-isolate in large groups.

Testing and isolating – Primary School



If I catch covid

When some people catch covid, their body gives them a clue that they have it. These are called symptoms.

The main symptoms of covid are: you feel very hot (a high temperature), a new cough that won't stop, or you your sense of taste and smell changes.

But...some people have no clues (or symptoms) but they still have the virus. The only way to be certain is to take a test.

If you have the symptoms of covid, you will be asked to go home and take a test. You stay at home until you get the result. If your test says you don't have covid, you can go back to school. If you do have covid you should stay at home a bit longer. The test you will take is called a PCR test.

If someone in my class catches covid

If someone you have been close to has the virus, you may be asked to take a test to see if you have the virus too. You can stay in school while you wait for the result. If your test says you have the virus, you will be asked to stay at home for a bit. But if it says you don't have the virus, you can stay at school as normal. The test you will be asked to take is called a PCR test.



Testing and isolating – Secondary School and College



Most of you will be used to taking regular covid tests at school and at home.

On your first week, you will be asked to take two covid tests at school. These tests will be done 3-5 days apart. These will be the lateral flow tests that give you the result in 30 minutes. Your school might be staggering your start date to allow these tests to happen.

After that, you will be asked to test yourself at home twice a week. Around 1 in 3 people who have covid show no symptoms and can spread it without knowing. Taking regular tests helps to reduce the spread of covid and will help keep as many young people in class as possible.

If I have symptoms

The main symptoms of covid are: a high temperature, a new continuous cough, a change to your sense of taste and smell. If you have any of these symptoms you must go home and take a PCR test. You stay at home until you get the result. If it is negative, you can go back to school / college. If it is positive you must continue to self-isolate for the required amount (currently 10 days). The self-isolation period includes the day your symptoms started and the next 10 full days.

If someone I have close contact with tests positive

You do not need to self-isolate. You will be asked to take a PCR test, but you can stay in school until you get the result. If you test positive you must self-isolate. If you test negative, you can remain at school.

Remote learning

If you are self-isolating you will continue with your lessons at home using your school's remote learning system.



Will I get the vaccine?

If you are aged 12 to 17 you will be offered the vaccine.

All those aged 16 or over in England have been offered at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccine.

This autumn all those aged 12 to 15 will be offered their first dose.

Exams

Exams are expected to return in 2022 for GCSEs, A-levels and vocational qualifications. You might be told in advance what topics will come up in your exams, but more information will be given later.



How to cope if you are feeling worried

Write down all the things you're excited about:



Write down all the things you are worried about:



You can show what you have written to an adult you trust (like your mum / dad / carer) and they can talk about it with you.

Sometimes we worry about something new because we don't know what it will be like. When we get there it isn't anywhere near as bad as we thought it was going to be. And all that worry was for nothing!

A good tip is to **be prepared**. Ask your school to give you as much information as they can about what changes there will be. You can spend some time thinking about this and getting used to the idea so that when your school welcomes you back, it isn't a surprise.

Who to talk to

If you have a school counsellor they are there to listen to you and support you.

Child line offers online and telephone support:

www.childline.org.uk

0800 1111



Some tips on hygiene

We all need to wash our hands often

Click or tap the video below which shows you how to wash your hands properly.



Catch it! Bin it! Kill it!

When we cough or sneeze we can pass on infections.

We can reduce the risk by coughing or sneezing into a tissue, putting it in the bin and then washing our hands thoroughly.





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