

Information for all education and childcare settings on new measures in response to the identification of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in the UK

On Saturday 27 November, the Prime Minister [announced](#) new temporary measures following the emergence of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in the UK.

The new measures will be introduced as a precaution to slow down the spread of the variant while we gather more information. We will continue to keep this under review as the situation develops.

Face coverings

Face coverings should be worn in communal areas in all settings by staff, visitors and pupils or students in year 7 and above, unless they are exempt.

Pupils or students (in year 7 or above) should continue to wear face coverings on public and dedicated school transport, unless they are exempt.

Testing

All educational and childcare settings should continue to encourage staff and students to test twice weekly using lateral flow device (LFD) tests.

Contact tracing and isolation

The [current guidance on contact tracing and isolation](#) remains in place. In addition to these, any suspected or confirmed close contacts of the Omicron variant will be asked to isolate for 10 days regardless of vaccination status or age. You will be contacted directly and told to isolate.

Vaccination

All eligible staff and students aged 12 and over are encouraged to take up the offer of the vaccine, including boosters.

Vaccines are our best defence against COVID-19. They help protect young people and adults, and benefit those around them. Vaccination makes people less likely to catch the virus and less likely to pass it on.

To book a vaccination, please visit: [Book or manage a coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccination – NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#).

Changes to the red list for international travel to England

Individuals arriving in England from red list countries must follow the [red list](#) rules.

South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and Zimbabwe moved onto the red list at 12pm Friday 26 November.

Angola, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia were added to the red list 4am Sunday 28 November.

Schools, out of school settings and colleges will want to consider whether to go ahead with planned international educational visits at this time, recognising the risk of disruption to education resulting from the need to isolate and test on arrival back into the UK.

The information below has not changed since our last update

Department for Education COVID-19 helpline

The [Department for Education COVID-19 helpline](#) and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Advice Service, (formally the Public Health England (PHE) Advice Service) are available to answer any questions you have about COVID-19 relating to education and childcare settings and children's social care.

Department for Education guidance

Our guidance to support education and childcare providers, local authorities and parents during the COVID-19 pandemic can be accessed using the links below:

- [Guidance for early years and childcare providers](#)
- [Guidance for schools](#)
- [Guidance for further and higher education providers](#)
- [Guidance for local authority children's services](#)
- [Guidance for special schools and other specialist settings](#)
- [Guidance for parents and carers](#)