

UCS Bolton - Control Measures Update – April 2022

The vast majority of control measures guidelines have now been removed in England. The guidance now relates to ‘living with Covid-19’ with the following recommendations identified:

There are simple things you can do in your daily life that will help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections and protect those at highest risk.

Things you can choose to do are:

1. Get vaccinated.
2. Let fresh air in if meeting others indoors.
3. Practice good hygiene:
 - wash your hands
 - cover your coughs and sneezes
 - clean your surroundings frequently
4. Wear a face covering or a face mask.

The school ‘Risk Assessment’ still exists in a form that is applicable if any form of stricter control measures are re-introduced in the future. The key recent changes have been the removal of ‘free’ testing in the majority of situations and a reduction in ‘optional’ isolation time to 5 days for adults and 3 days for students. Key points to remember at this stage:

- National guidance remains that masks do not need to be worn by staff and students in any area of the school. Staff and students may choose to still wear masks in school, however it is the recommendation of the DfE that when staff are delivering lessons they should not be wearing masks, using other methods of mitigation like windows open for ventilation and maintaining 2 metres social distancing.
- If a member of staff or student is returning from isolation it is recommended that they do wear masks when they cannot effectively socially distance from others when indoors.
- Students should also be reminded that if they use public transport to get to and from school that masks are still recommended, especially if showing any form of cold or flu symptoms, but are no longer compulsory.

With respect to improving safety in classrooms then certain guidance can be followed where possible – These are as follows:

1. If you can, all windows in your room open to their full width and the door to your classroom open. Sanitising of desks is no longer necessary

between lessons due to recent studies showing that transmission of Covid from ‘hard’ surfaces is significantly lower than from aerosol transmission.

2. If this creates an issue with room temperature, then restrict the width of the window opening, e.g. with a wedge.
3. If this still creates an issue with room temperature then close the windows, but ensure that the room door is left open. Staff are also encouraged to maintain 2 metres distance from students.

What to do if you or someone else presents sign of illness?

An issue that has occurred this term has been what to do if a student has reported feeling unwell during school-time, in particular during lessons. This issue has been complicated recently by a cold/flu bug that has been going round with some similar symptoms to Covid-19.

First of all, to reduce pressure on staff time and to link in with when staff are available, staff are now asked to email IBA, SKE or TSW with their concerns and students will be tested as soon as possible.

Information from NHS England, and observation of positive cases in school, do show that at least one of the three initial key Covid-19 symptoms should be present when considering that a student (or staff member) may have this illness. These are:

1. A high temperature (from a reading, not from the student saying that they feel hot or have a temperature) – this is now the most important symptom with respect to isolation period.
2. Lack or change of sense of taste and/or smell (students have been genuinely concerned about this when it has happened)
3. A new, persistent (usually dry) cough (that is often in a burst of uncontrolled coughing several times an hour, rather than just the occasional repeated single cough)
4. Other symptoms (as updated on the NHS website - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/main-symptoms/>) are now identified, but many of these are similar to Cold or Flu. Linked to recent cases on school, a sore throat has been quite common for people testing positive.

If a member of staff or students tests positive on a LFD test, then they no longer need to go for a PCR test. PCR tests are now restricted for use in certain conditions - <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

The first day of symptoms or testing positive is now known as Day 0. It is no longer compulsory to isolate when testing positive, but due to the nature of schools and close proximity to numerous people, it is still recommended to isolate until Day 5. On returning to work on Day 6 it is recommended that a mask is worn indoors until Day 10.

There is now no longer any need to continue testing during the isolation phase, however if you are still feeling unwell, especially a high temperature, then isolation is recommended until either Day 10 or when your temperature returns to normal, whichever is earlier

For students, the principal difference is that they only need to isolate until Day 3, and return on Day 4, as long as their temperature is 'normal'. Again, masks are recommended until Day 10 when in close proximity to others.