



Attending school during the Covid-19 pandemic – FAQs for parents, carers and guardians

1. What happens if my child develops symptoms whilst at school?

If your child develops symptoms while they are at school, they will be taken out of class and a parent or guardian will be asked to collect them. They will then need to stay at home, self-isolate and get tested.

2. What happens if a pupil/teacher in my child's school tests positive?

Your child's school will inform Public Health England and Bristol City Council. They will then advise the school on any action that is needed based on the latest public health advice.

The advice service will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the pupil or teacher during the period that they were infectious.

Schools will send home pupils who have been in close contact with the pupil or teacher who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the pupil or teacher when they were infectious.

3. If a pupil tests positive, why can't I know who it is?

As with all other reasons for absence due to illness, this is confidential information between the family and the school. The school is supported by Public Health England to ensure that contact tracing is carried out, and those who are identified as having been in contact with the person who tested positive will be contacted so they can self-isolate.

4. Why can't I get a test for my child even if they don't have symptoms, as this would put my mind at rest?

It is only necessary to get a test if your child has symptoms. This is because a child can test negative if tested too early and it may offer false reassurance in a situation when they may still develop symptoms following contact with someone who was infectious. Contacts of a confirmed case must self-isolate for the full 14 days, even if they receive a negative test result. We must also prioritise tests for those who have symptoms.

5. Do I have to self-isolate if my child has been sent home to self-isolate because they were in contact with someone who had a positive test result?

No. Household members do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child who is self-isolating develops symptoms.

6. Why do my other children in other bubbles at the school not need to self-isolate?

They don't need to self-isolate because they have not had close contact with the case. Only if your child develops symptoms would other children and adults in the household need to self-isolate because they would then be defined as close contacts.



As schools are careful to keep groups of children separate, possible contacts are usually just the other children in the same bubble. If a confirmed case has had contact with others outside their bubble, they would also be advised to self-isolate.

7. How do you define a 'contact'?

Schools will be provided with additional support from Public Health England and Bristol City Council to identify close contacts. A 'contact' is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 anytime from two days before the person was symptomatic, up to 10 days from onset of symptoms (this is when they are infectious to others).

8. How can you ensure that no one else will test positive?

Self-isolation of people with symptoms and people they have been in close contact with is key to reducing risk of other people becoming positive.

9. What is the school procedure in the event of an outbreak?

All schools in Bristol have an outbreak plan and would work with Public Health England and Bristol City Council to implement that plan in the event of an outbreak.

10. How am I supposed to drop my children off at school if I have one at home self-isolating?

Parents, carers and guardians are responsible for ensuring regular attendance and that includes making sure that their children can still get to school. This is the same as a sibling being ill under normal circumstances. Only the child that is required to self-isolate is excused from attending school. Other siblings are still required to attend school regularly.

In order to ensure that happens, you might need to devise a temporary support plan which might include asking family members, relatives or friends to provide assistance. If you are experiencing issues with getting your children to school then you must speak with your child's school. Schools often have a range of support strategies available and they might be able to signpost you to some temporary assistance or offer a degree of flexibility depending on your individual circumstances.

11. If one of my children is self-isolating and I can't get the others in, will I be fined?

Parents, carers and guardians are responsible for ensuring regular attendance. Only the child that is required to isolate is excused from attending school. Other siblings are still required to attend school regularly and this is the same as a sibling being ill under normal circumstances. If you are experiencing issues with school attendance then you must speak with your child's school. Schools often have a range of support strategies available.

Parents, carers and guardians are reminded that any unauthorised absences may result in a penalty notice or prosecution. However, every attempt to resolve parent, carers and guardians concerns and improve a child's attendance will be made before any formal action is considered.

12. If one of my children is self-isolating and I can't get the others in, will work be provided?



Schools are expected to have a plan in place to provide work for those pupils who are self-isolating, so they can carry on their education remotely. Each school will have their own plan for how this will work and will communicate with the parents, carers and guardians of those pupils affected.

However, only the child that is required to self-isolate is excused from attending school. Other siblings are still required to attend school regularly – this is the same as a sibling being ill under normal circumstances. Please contact your school if you require support in ensuring non-affected siblings attend school.

13. How will I access the free school meals provision if my child is self-isolating?

Schools will have their own plans to support free school meal (FSM) pupils who need to self-isolate. Parents should speak to their school to discuss how FSM will be provided.

14. What happens if there is a local lockdown? Does my child attend school?

If rates of the disease rise locally, schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending school. Schools will follow Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown.