



To all Headteachers

**Children, Young People and
Education Directorate**

Sessions House
County Hall
MAIDSTONE
Kent ME14 1XQ

Phone: 03000 414989
Ask for: Matt Dunkley
Email: Matt.Dunkley@kent.gov.uk

Date: 10th November 2020

Dear Colleague

I hope that this letter finds you well. I am very conscious that many of you are no longer able to take breaks over the weekend that are vital to your and your staff's wellbeing resulting from having to manage a constantly changing position as you are notified of staff and children testing positive or being contacted via Track and Trace. Some of you will be in academy trusts who are your employer and are providing you with wellbeing support directly, for others, we are talking with KAH colleagues to ensure that we can provide additional wellbeing support for senior leaders over this period and will be writing to you shortly to provide you with further information.

I have several short updates for you that I hope you will find helpful. Some build on earlier information provided just before half term and some relate to more detailed information now available as schools raise queries on the practicalities of interpreting and implementing the most recent DfE guidance. We also have some updates from Public Health England as they respond to the growing number of cases in schools.

Schools with positive cases, speaking to Public Health England via the DfE helpline or direct, have reported that they have seen a recent change in the interpretation of a contact when discussing their risk assessments. This can have a bearing on how you manage your staff movements and bubbles in school and therefore we have set out the latest guidance below:

Public Health England: What is meant by a 'contact'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person#what-do-we-mean-by-a-contact>

A 'contact' is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 anytime from 2 days before the person was symptomatic up to 10 days from

onset of symptoms (this is when they are infectious to others). For example, a contact can be:

- people who spend significant time in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19
- sexual partners
- **a person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre), with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19**, including:
 - being coughed on
 - having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
 - having skin-to-skin physical contact, or
 - **contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact**
- **a person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes**
- a person who has travelled in a small vehicle with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or in a large vehicle or plane near someone who has tested positive for COVID-19

Where an interaction between 2 people has taken place through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen, this would not be considered sufficient contact, provided that there has been no other contact such as any of those indicated above.

Contacts of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 need to self-isolate at home because they are at risk of developing symptoms themselves in the next 14 days and could spread the virus to others before the symptoms begin.

Track and Trace:

Schools are contacting us to query the number of staff who are now receiving messages to self-isolate due to the app indicating they have been near a person who has tested positive. In some cases, staff themselves are puzzled as the communication does not enable them to identify where and when this could have taken place. We would advise staff and schools to err on the side of caution when receiving a message and to adhere to the request to self-isolate as this is following NHS and Government advice:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/nhs-test-and-trace-if-youve-been-in-contact-with-a-person-who-has-coronavirus/>

Where an individual wishes to query a contact message they can:

1. *complete a proforma <https://www.nhs.uk/contact-us/nhs-app-contact-us> it is expected that you receive a response within 48 hours*
2. *or email scas.covid19testingcomplaint@nhs.net. - Email your name and reference number. (this is to be used for complaints only)*

The link to the guidance and relevant extracts is set out below. It may help to have an agreed policy or procedure for your school on how the app is managed whilst staff and students are on site.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-the-nhs-covid-19-app-in-schools-and-further-education-colleges/use-of-the-nhs-covid-19-app-in-schools-and-further-education-colleges>

It is possible to pause the contact tracing function ('trace') in the app. If it is paused, the phone and Bluetooth remain on, but the phone does not record contacts. Pausing contact tracing is only recommended in 3 situations:

- when an individual is not able to have their phone with them, for example because it is stored in a locker or communal area – this is to avoid the app picking up contacts when the individual is not with their phone*
- when an individual is working behind a Perspex (or equivalent) screen, fully protected from other colleagues and members of the public, as the individual is considered to be adequately protected from contracting coronavirus (COVID-19)*
- in a health or care setting where staff are wearing medical grade PPE (for example, a surgical mask) as these individuals are also considered to be adequately protected*

Where mobile phones are required to be left in lockers or bags in communal areas at all times, it is recommended that settings advise or require students and staff to pause contact tracing whilst on the premises under these circumstances, to avoid the app misidentifying close contacts. When someone switches it off, the app will give the user the option to set a reminder for 4, 8 or 12 hours, after which they will receive a notification to remind them to switch contact tracing back on.

Clarification on what is meant by extra-curricular activities or 'wraparound care'

The DfE blog has provided some helpful clarification that may help schools to consider their position regarding their after-school provision, including clubs and other activities.

<https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/11/06/schools-and-sport-under-new-restrictions-your-questions-answered/>

In essence, schools can and should continue to provide PE lessons as well as extra-curricular sports activities for their pupils during the school day, such as at lunchtime.

Schools should also continue to offer before- and after-school activities or clubs for their pupils where these are in place to help parents keep working, seek work, or to attend education or training, as well as for the purposes of respite care for vulnerable children. This includes activities or clubs not only related to PE and sport but also music, dance and drama.

Most of these clubs or activities already fulfil this 'wraparound care' role and so can continue during the new national measures introduced in England on 5 November.

In Year Admissions

Schools are advised that the In -Year Admissions process (including the Fair Access Protocol) remains unaffected by the recent National Lockdown. Schools should continue to process applications, offer, and induct new pupils where spaces are available and take part in scheduled local Fair Access Panels. Fair Access has been contacted by a small number of schools who have queried whether the following Government guidance means that Admission processes should cease:

Visitors to the setting

Settings should restrict all visits to the setting to those that are absolutely necessary. This means suspending parent and carer visits for:

- *new admissions*
- *settling-in children new to the setting*
- *attending organised performances*

It should be noted that this guidance is directed to Early Years and Child Care settings only and does not relate to school admissions processes. This Early Years guidance is also limited to settings allowing parental/carer access their sites and does not limit their ability to induct new children during lockdown where they have capacity to do so. Guidance is provided to schools in relation to parental visits and is different to that of Early Years settings. It states:

Schools should ensure site guidance on physical distancing and hygiene is explained to visitors on or before arrival. Where visits can happen outside of school hours, they should. A record should be kept of all visitors with sufficient detail to support rapid contact tracing if required by NHS Test and Trace.

Risk assessments consider what measures schools need to protect the health and safety of all:

*staff
pupils
visitors
contractors*

If schools have any queries about the In Year Admissions process, they should contact inyearadmissions@kent.gov.uk

Wellbeing for Education Return

We wanted to make sure that all Kent schools knew about the funded training being offered, as some you may have been on half term for the last couple of weeks and missed the earlier notifications. The link provided will take you through to information about the programme. If you scroll down, you will find that we have included links to all of the training sessions if you or your colleagues would like to attend: [Wellbeing for Education Return](#)

The scheme has been launched to improve mental health and wellbeing support across the country and better respond to the emotional impact of the coronavirus pandemic on our students and staff.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Dunkley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Matt Dunkley CBE
Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education