

Monday, 7 February 2022

Contact Tracing in education settings ends

From Monday, 7 February, all children and young people from pre-school age (3 to 4 years old) and above are being asked to take a lateral flow test before going to nursery, school, or college. School-led contact tracing has now ceased.

Children below pre-school age are being asked to have a lateral flow test (LFT) at least twice weekly, especially if they attend nursery settings.

This type of testing before going to nursery or school means the need for school-led contact tracing is no longer required as positive cases will be detected early on, irrespective of any known contact history. Therefore, parents will no longer be informed by their school if their child is a direct contact.

If a positive LFT is received, the result should be submitted on the online portal and a confirmatory PCR test should be booked. The child should be kept at home and the isolation period will begin from the date the LFT result was submitted online.

After completing the required isolation period, lateral flow testing should restart 28 days after the initial positive result. This is to avoid any false positives arising and prevent a child unnecessarily missing face to face education. If any new symptoms are developed after leaving isolation, then a PCR test should be booked.

Children will be able to leave their isolation as per the below:

Under 12s	<p>The child must complete a minimum of 5 full days of isolation.</p> <p>The child can leave isolation by taking and recording two consecutive negative lateral flow tests (LFTs) 24 hours apart, providing they are symptom-free.</p> <p>First clearance LFT can be taken on the 5th day after the initial positive test result.</p>
Over 12s who are fully vaccinated	<p>The child must complete a minimum of 5 full days of isolation.</p>

	<p>The child can leave isolation by taking and recording two consecutive negative lateral flow tests (LFTs) 24 hours apart, providing they are symptom-free.</p> <p>First clearance LFT can be taken on the 5th day after the initial positive test result.</p>
Over 12s who are not fully vaccinated	<p>The child must complete a minimum of 7 full days of isolation.</p> <p>The child can leave isolation by taking and recording two consecutive negative lateral flow tests (LFTs) 24 hours apart, providing they are symptom-free.</p> <p>First clearance LFT can be taken on the 7th day after the initial positive test result.</p>

Deputy Medical Officer for Health, Dr Ivan Muscat, said: "Replacing the need for schools-led contact tracing by asking children to test before attending school will effectively detect COVID-19 cases.

"Taking a LFT before leaving home is more likely to result in identifying COVID-19 positives in students and staff, rather than one-off PCR tests. This change will also mean the faster detection of positive cases and replaces the need for contact tracing because of ongoing universal screening."

Minister for Education, Deputy Scott Wickenden, said: "We wish to safely reduce the impact COVID-19 is having on day-to-day activities in keeping with the COVID-19 de-escalation.

"I understand that contact tracing in educational settings has been disruptive for many children, parents and school staff. Replacing this with a requirement for all children and young people going to pre-school or higher, to test themselves before they go, means that positive cases will be identified quickly and effectively.

"I'd like to remind parents and children that if you have a positive LFT, you must isolate and book a confirmatory PCR test. Please ensure you keep up with daily LFTs by signing up to the free Home Testing Programme on gov.je/testing.

"Please also be reminded that maintaining excellent vaccination coverage in the Island is fundamental for the de-escalation of COVID-19 measures, so please ensure you and your families are fully vaccinated so that we can maintain this de-escalation, and to protect yourself, teachers, and classmates at school."

Anyone showing any symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend school or work. Please book a PCR test and keep them at home. For the full list of symptoms, visit gov.je/symptoms.