

Updated: 21/01/2021



Determining COVID-19 Contacts in Education Settings

Contact definitions:

Close contacts are those who have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 whilst in their infectious period – 48 hours before and up to 10 days after symptom onset or date of test if tested asymptotically – under the following conditions:

- 1) Those who have had **face-to-face contact within 1 metre for any length of time**, including being coughed on, having a face-to-face conversation, having skin-to-skin physical contact.
- 2) Those who have been **within 1 metre for 1 minute or more without face-to-face contact** (e.g. sitting/standing side by side).
- 3) Those who have been **within 1-2 metres for 15 minutes or more**. This can either be on a **single occasion or over the course of a day** (e.g. several short conversations).
- 4) Those who have **travelled in the same vehicle**.

The following guidance is available from Public Health England and the DfE to help with determining close contacts in your setting.

Childminders

- All children who have attended the setting with the case during the infectious period would be considered contacts in these age groups on the basis that social distancing is assumed not possible.

EYFS and Key Stage 1 (Foundation to Year 2)

- Usually children who had shared a classroom with the case during their infectious period would be considered contacts in these age groups on the basis that social distancing is assumed not possible.
- Identify everyone in the class as contacts and advise isolation. This is the same whether the case is a child or a staff member in these age groups.
- Check friendship groups - identify contacts as children who are known to have had face to face contact with them during their infectious period.
- Are there any other staff members who report that they have had close contact during this period?
- Are there any other people who may have had face to face contact with the case at break times or in other group activities such as sport or music lessons?
- Are there any after school clubs/provisions that need to be considered?

Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6)

- If children mix a lot within the classroom then the whole class would usually be defined as contacts.
- If there is a seating plan for all lessons and it is felt that social distancing has been observed in the classroom, then these can be considered instead. Identify contacts as children who sit within 2 metres of the case during their infectious period in school.
- Check friendship groups - identify contacts as children who are known to have had face to face contact with them during their infectious period.
- Are there any other staff members who have also had close contact with the case during the infectious period?
- Are there any other people who may have had face to face contact with the case at break times or in other group activities such as sport or music lessons?
- Are there any after school clubs/provisions that need to be considered?
- Does the case use school designated transport?
- If the case is a teacher or staff member, then social distancing may have been possible. Ask if the teacher can identify other members of staff and other children who they had close contact with during their infectious period.

Key Stage 3, 4, 5, FE and above (Years 7 – 13+)

The default should not be to isolate the whole class, bubble, or year group in a secondary setting or course/departments in FE.

- Look at the student timetable to identify classes during the infectious period.
- Look at seating plans – identify contacts who sat within 2 metres of the case during their infectious period.
- Check friendship groups – identify contacts of students who are known to have had face to face contact with them during the infectious period.
- Are there any staff members who report that they have had close contact with the case during the infectious period? This may include teachers, but protocols should be in place to maintain distance, particularly when teachers are working across classes.
- Are there any other people who may have had contact with the case at break times or in other group activities such as sport or music lessons.
- Are there any after school clubs/provisions that need to be considered?
- Does the case use school designated transport?
- If the case is a teacher, then social distancing should be assumed to be possible unless otherwise stated that it has not been maintained. Ask if the teacher can identify all the other members of staff and students who they had close contact with during their infectious period.

Remember: Keep a record of individuals who are identified as contacts. Document how many people will be asked to isolate.