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News

Keeping schools safe

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Part of: [Public safety and emergencies](#), [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in Scotland](#), [Education](#)

Updated COVID-19 guidance.

Guidance to reduce the risks of COVID-19 in schools has been updated in light of the Omicron variant.

Safety mitigations that were already in place must continue to be strictly followed and some measures that were previously relaxed are being reintroduced.

Key changes include:

- a strengthened approach to minimising contacts, primarily through the reintroduction of groupings where practical
- a strengthened approach to self-isolation for household contacts of positive cases
- tightened restrictions on school visitors
- updated guidance on regular ventilation and CO2 monitoring
- measures aimed at increasing the uptake of regular asymptomatic testing
- an update to guidance on school visits and trips
- a requirement for schools and local authorities to provide essential support for particular groups, including vulnerable children and young people, in the event of temporary school closures at a local level
- staff eligibility for voluntary exemption from self-isolation under critical worker guidance

Local authorities and schools should implement the changes as soon as they can from the start of the January term.

Updated guidance for Early Learning and Childcare, childminder and school age childcare services has also been published.

Education Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville said:

“Throughout the pandemic, our priority has been to keep our children, young people and staff safe. These changes reflect the threat presented by the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, and they will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

“The updated guidance has been informed by advice from the Advisory Subgroup on Education and Children’s Issues and senior clinicians, based on the latest public health assessment of the situation, with input from the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group.

“In addition to the changes, it’s more important than ever that safety measures already in place in schools are strictly followed. These include physical distancing, one-way systems and the correct use of face coverings.”

Background:

[Guidance on reducing COVID risks in schools](#)

[Guidance on reducing COVID risks in ELC services](#)

[Guidance on reducing COVID risks in school age childcare services](#)

[Guidance on reducing COVID in settings in childminder services](#)

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