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Covid in Scotland: Rules on distancing and face masks relaxed further

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Coronavirus



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The changes mean people leading religious services without a face mask can return to one-metre physical distancing

Rules on physical distancing and the wearing of face masks in certain circumstances are being relaxed.

It follows First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's announcement on Tuesday that an "improving situation" allowed the easing of more Covid restrictions.

Face masks will no longer be required for adults taking part in organised activities with children under five.

And face covering exemptions requiring two-metre physical distancing will see a reduction to one metre from Friday.

The exemptions apply in certain indoor settings, for example receptionists and people leading religious services.

The two-metre distancing requirement was introduced in December as a response to the spread of the highly infectious Omicron variant.

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Confirmed Covid cases in Scotland have reduced from an average of about 13,500 a day on 12 January to about 7,500 on Thursday.

The number of people in hospital with Covid has also been declining, going down from a high of 1,571 people on 19 January to 1,319.

The wearing of face coverings in schools remains.

'Better to be safe'

Jon Reid, head teacher at Larbet High school and president of School Leaders Scotland said he was happy to stick to mask-wearing for the time being.

He told BBC's Good Morning Scotland: "I am a head teacher not a clinician. I am not an epidemiologist. Although I see what's going on in my own school, I don't know what's happening in the wider community and what the national picture is.

"We have always taken the advice of the clinicians and we have always had a cautious approach and that's what they are urging then I absolutely think it's better to be safe.

"If that's what they think, then the sensible thing to do is to keep going for another few weeks.

On Tuesday, Ms Sturgeon said the "significantly improved situation" had given the Scottish government "confidence" to lift most of the remaining measures

that were introduced before Christmas in a bid to slow the spread of Omicron.

New rules which forced the closure of nightclubs in Scotland and limited crowds at large indoor events have already been lifted.

From next week, the working from home requirement will also be removed.

Employers will instead be encouraged to adopt a "hybrid" model, with workers spending time in the office and at home.

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