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**Education and childcare during coronavirus** 

> Further education (FE) providers: return in January 2021

Department for Education

Part of

Guidance Further education (FE) providers: return in January 2021

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About this guidance

## Who this guidance is for To manage the transmission of the virus and ensure education resumes in further education, we are supporting colleges to put in place asymptomatic Main points testing, so that students and staff can access a test before resuming face to Priorities for return from 4 January 2021 face education by 11 January. Residential providers This guidance sets out more information following the announcement on 17 **Apprenticeships** December 2020 regarding testing to minimise cases and transmission of Free college meals coronavirus (COVID-19) at the start of term.

**About this guidance** 

Safeguarding expectations **Testing operations Transport** 

Transporting students for a lateral flow device test in the first week of term

It also covers expectations for students with education, health and care

institutions. Special post-16 institutions should also read the guidance for

special schools and other specialist settings. Apprenticeship providers

should also read the guidance on providing apprenticeships during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

(EHC) plans in mainstream FE settings, including special post-16

The main points for this guidance are:

teachers and staff across education and childcare have ensured that settings remain as safe and COVID-secure as possible. To support public health efforts during the return to education in January

2021, colleges in England will be able to offer staff and students access to additional coronavirus (COVID-19) testing from the first week of January. This will help deliver the national priority of keeping as many students and teachers as possible in education beyond the start of term, minimising the spread of the virus and disruption caused by coronavirus (COVID-19) cases

the recent higher rates of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

many as possible from the week of the 4 January. The government will

arising in education settings.

This guidance sets out the exceptional measures to be put in place at the

Already, the implementation of safety measures and the system of controls

in place in education settings creates an inherently safer environment for children, young people and staff, in which PHE and DHSC have confirmed the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. However, to go

Younger students in colleges are being prioritised for testing, in response to

All colleges will be offered the opportunity to test their students, reaching as

testing programme will align with the rapid coronavirus testing that the government is putting in place from the start of the spring term. Coronavirus (COVID-19) asymptomatic testing in schools and colleges guidance provides

Rapidly identifying and containing any asymptomatic cases through this

with others learning remotely. 3. Offering colleges help, support and facilities to test as many students as possible as they resume face-to-face education.

To reduce the risk of transmission at the start of term, while asymptomatic

educational delivery during the week commencing 4 January during which

the expectation to conduct the majority of delivery on-site will not apply.

Asymptomatic testing will be optional but strongly encouraged. From 11

Priorities for return from 4 January

Support and on-site teaching and attendance should begin on 4 January for

testing is being conducted, we are asking colleges to reduce on-site

January normal timetabled delivery should begin for all students.

January, with vulnerable young people, those due to take exams and

assessments and other priority groups receiving face to face education,

1. Supporting colleges to set up a regular testing programme to test staff

and the close contacts of staff and students who test positive for the

2. Reducing the number of students in colleges for the first full week of

• vulnerable young people, including all students in post-16 specialist institutions

this academic year

This will involve:

for students

education resuming from 11 January 2021.

people, and the other priority groups

2021

of the practical nature of study (that cannot be undertaken at a later point) those on technical programmes who need to access specialised equipment • those preparing for upcoming assessments or exams, for example

those who are not able to access remote education, for example, because

vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs), GCSEs and A levels during

You should plan for a phased start back to on-site provision during the week

• all students (and staff) being offered 2 lateral flow device tests, starting in

priority on-site attendance for those taking assessments during the spring

exam series (students taking exams in January 2021 should be prioritised

for asymptomatic testing and encouraged to undertake a test prior to

sitting their exam or assessment but as testing is not mandatory they

week commencing 4 January 2021, prioritising staff, vulnerable young

commencing 4 January 2021 to allow for student testing ahead of normal

should not be refused access to their exam if they have not already been

• usual timetabled on-site provision from the first day of term for vulnerable young people, and those other priority groups remote education for those who are not attending whilst asymptomatic testing is being undertaken remote education until week commencing 11

• full timetabled delivery from 11 January for all students

January, using best endeavours to meet remote education expectations

maintain. You should ensure that all students understand the importance of following the relevant rules for the tier that they are in whilst on-site, at home and travelling to and from site. At all times you should ensure that the testing programme itself is managed in line with existing preventative control advice including use of social distancing, good hand and respiratory hygiene, increasing fresh air ventilation and more.

• adopted children or children on a special guardianship order; those at risk of becoming 'not in employment, education or training' (NEET) • those living in temporary accommodation; those who are young carers; those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study) • care leavers • other children and young people at the provider and local authority's

remotely due to coronavirus (COVID-19). <u>2021</u>.

Winter Grant Scheme.

Free college meals

for training or assessment.

A rapid asymptomatic testing programme is already set to be rolled out from January in secondary schools and colleges. This will enable secondary school and college staff to be tested weekly, as well as testing of close contacts of both staff and pupils or students to avoid the need for self-isolation.

make a referral to children's social care.

**Testing operations** 

The transport to school and other places of education guidance remains in place. Those involved in the provision of home to school or college transport must do all that is reasonably practicable to maximise social distancing where possible and minimise the risk of transmission. Local authorities are

Transporting students for a lateral flow device test in the first week of

to be sufficiently flexible to reflect this.

and then return home following their test.

term

Is this page useful?

Yes

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Business and self-employed

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otherwise stated

Childcare and parenting

Crime, justice and the law

Disabled people

<u>Help</u>

**Driving and transport** 

No

vacant seats where possible.

busy times and routes if possible. This will allow social distancing to be practised.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support Check the new rules for January 2021

Working, jobs and pensions

Housing and local services

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We will keep this guidance under review and update as necessary. Who this guidance is for Print this page This guidance is for leaders and staff in: • sixth form colleges • general FE colleges • special post-16 institutions

Main points

• priorities for the return of students asymptomatic testing for coronavirus (COVID-19) prior to return Since the start of the academic year, the continuing efforts of leaders,

encourage as many as possible to take up the offer. start of the new year.

virus.

further still in exceptional circumstances when settings return, testing beginning week commencing 4 January will help to identify asymptomatic cases more quickly. This will avoid individuals carrying the infection unknowingly.

more detail. To manage transmission of the virus we are:

priority groups, or where online delivery would have significant negative consequences. These groups include: those who are due to take exams and assessments in January 2021

tested, if they are tested and receive a positive result they should selfisolate in accordance with the guidance and action should be taken to arrange a re-sit at a future point - you should contact the awarding organisation on the candidate's behalf to determine the next available assessment opportunity

You should continue to follow the system of controls to minimise risks including use of face coverings where social distancing is more difficult to

on-site provision for vulnerable young people and the other priority groups above in the week commencing 4 January and provide remote education for all other students. Full on-site provision should recommence on 11 January. Vulnerable young people include those who: are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989,

protection plan or who are a looked-after child

• have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

children's services

discretion

Residential providers

If your college chooses not to take up the testing offer, you should provide

including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child

have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or

local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could

therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:

children's social care services or in the process of being referred to

FE residential providers should similarly provide for a staggered start back to

on-site provision. However, in some cases, students will already have

returned to their educational accommodation before the start of term.

Where the students are already in their educational accommodation, you

should provide remote education to the students in their accommodation,

as if they were still at home, while arranging for tests, unless they meet any

arrangements for testing residential students through local partnerships or

children and young people on the edge of receiving support from

**Apprenticeships** Apprenticeship delivery and assessment (including the assessment of functional skills qualifications) is extremely flexible and should continue to

take place in person where doing so remotely is not possible.

This includes training and assessment in the workplace (unless the

workplace is required to close under local restriction tiers), in education and

assessment settings and in community settings where a venue is being used

of the priority groups identified above or you have already made

the arrangements we communicated on 4 December.

You should continue to support students who are eligible for, and usually receive, free meals. This includes students in further education, who are newly eligible. You should provide support even if students are studying Read further guidance on free meals in FE funded institutions for 2020 to

Make families aware that government have put in place a £170 million Covid

This funding has been allocated to local authorities in order to support those

Colleges must have regard to statutory guidance, keeping children safe in

colleges should have a designated safeguarding lead (DSL)). The DSL will

consider any case on its individual merits and if they think appropriate will

The additional testing, as described in the main points section, during the

week commencing 4 January 2021, will enable all staff and students to get

the student's first test is positive, they should immediately self-isolate and

tested early in the new year. This will be done with lateral flow device tests. If

have this positive test confirmed with a standard Polymerase Chain Reaction

(PCR) test (those taken when someone develops symptoms of coronavirus

again 3 days later. If this test is positive, they should self-isolate and confirm

commencing 4 January in advance of the asymptomatic testing announced

(COVID-19)). If the student's first test is negative, they should be tested

As many 16 to 19 students as possible should be tested during week

You will need to contribute some members of staff to support the

asymptomatic testing programme – ideally non-teaching staff. Identify 1 or 2

from 4 January. Volunteers and other test support staff will not need to have

The remaining testing workforce will be made up of volunteers and agency

reimbursed. Armed forces personnel will support directly through planning

staff brought in for this purpose. Reasonable workforce costs will be

Over Christmas colleges' responsibilities for contact tracing end on 23

December, meaning teachers should be able to get the break that they

not required to uniformly apply the social distancing guidelines for public

transport, on dedicated school or college transport. However, distancing

This means that where fewer students are attending, particularly during the

Colleges face different circumstances and there is a need for arrangements

Where practical, students who are receiving remote education during week

one, should arrive on-site or a community testing facility at a scheduled time

Where students are dependent on dedicated college transport, colleges and

local transport authorities may wish to consider whether there is scope to

For some students, it will not be possible to arrive and leave around

When using public transport, young people should plan ahead and avoid

There is something wrong with this page

run additional services during week one, in order to enable young people to

week commencing 4 January 2021, sufficient levels of capacity should be

maintained to maximise social distancing, including through the use of

In accordance with advice from PHE, students must also wear face

should still be put in place within vehicles wherever possible.

staff to support the recruitment of volunteers and agency staff and act as

liaison with the military and test and trace so that testing can commence

will generally involve liaising with the designated safeguarding lead (all

education. If staff have a concern they should act and act immediately. This

in need with food and other essentials across the winter period.

Safeguarding expectations

For individual students, testing should be encouraged but it cannot be mandated. More detailed operational advice will be issued shortly.

been trained in advance.

with colleges.

**Transport** 

**Testing workforce requirements** 

deserve before resuming work in the new term.

on 15 December coming into effect.

this with a PCR test.

coverings when travelling on dedicated transport to college. This does not apply to those who are exempt from wearing a face covering.

scheduled test appointment times. Where necessary students may attend on-site provision on the day of their test, until such time as dedicated transport is available. Where those students test positive they should follow the stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

arrive and leave for tests during the course of the day.

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Services

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