



## Guidance

# Boarding school students: quarantine and testing arrangements

Updated 16 December 2021

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## Introduction

The rules for international travel to England have been amended in response to the risks of the Omicron variant. International arrivals:

- aged 5 and above must now take a Day 2 PCR test and self-isolate at least until they receive a negative result
- aged 12 and above must now possess notification of a negative result from a pre-departure test taken no more than 2 days before their schedule time of departure for England

The guidance in this document applies to boarding school students travelling to attend a boarding school in England. This guidance applies to boarding school students who have travelled from both red list and non-red list countries.

Any boarding schools in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales who wish to host red list arrival students should follow the procedures and refer to the relevant guidance for those countries.

Rules for travel from countries and territories not on the red list depend on your vaccination status, or age and are set out in more detail in the following section.

In line with the international travel regulations and as set out in this guidance, unaccompanied boarding school students who have travelled from a [red list country](#) or been in a red list country in the ten days before the day they arrive in

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England must quarantine within accommodation provided for or arranged by their boarding school.

Anyone who is not a British or Irish national, or who does not have the right to reside in the UK, who has travelled from or through a red list country in the previous 10 days, is not permitted to enter the UK and should be told not to travel.

Boarding school students arriving from (or who have, in the past 10 days, travelled through) red list countries are not permitted to use the test to release scheme.

Note that boarding school students travelling from or through red list countries should never quarantine in the same 'household' (see below) as boarding school students travelling from non-red list countries.

## Travelling from non-red list countries

The rules for people entering England from abroad have recently been updated. Boarding school students who are travelling from a non-red list country should follow the guidance for their relevant age group and vaccination status if aged 18 or over, in the guidance [Travel to England from another country during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

All boarding school students must complete a passenger locator form. Boarding school students aged 12 years or over, regardless of vaccination status, must take a PCR or Lateral Flow COVID-19 test before they travel to England from outside the common travel area. This is known as a pre-departure test. The test must be taken in the 2 days before their travel service to England is scheduled to depart. If the journey to England is a multi-leg journey, boarding school students must take the test in the 2 days before the start of the first leg of travel.

On their arrival in England, all boarding school students aged 5 or over must take a PCR test on or before day 2 and self-isolate until they receive a negative result.

Schools should also be aware that, as part of the targeted measures to slow down the spread of the Omicron variant, all contacts of a person who has, or is suspected of having, the Omicron variant are required to self-isolate, regardless of their vaccination status. The new self-isolation requirements for those identified as being close contacts of someone who has tested positive are explained in [Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection who do not live with the person](#) and [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).

## Travelling from or through red list

# **countries: international travel regulations**

Subject to certain exceptions, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability) (England) Regulations 2021 (“the International Travel Regulations”) require people who have travelled to, from or through a red list country, in the 10 days before the day they arrive in England, to self-isolate in government approved accommodation. One exception means that boarding school students, who have travelled from or through a red list country in that 10-day period, are instead to self-isolate in accommodation provided by their school. The exception would only benefit a boarding school student to whom all of the following conditions apply:

- is, or was on the 1 September 2021, a child (a person under the age of 18)
- travels to the UK for the purposes of receiving education at a boarding school in the UK<sup>[\[footnote 1\]](#)</sup> at which education and accommodation is due to be provided for them
- is not accompanied into the UK by an individual who has responsibility for them, or if they are aged 18 or over, would have had such responsibility if they were a child (see regulation 2(2) of the International Travel Regulations for how ‘responsibility’ is to be construed)
- the Secretary of State has, in effect, confirmed in writing that this exception applies in relation to them and has not withdrawn that confirmation

‘Boarding school’ covers, amongst other things, the following institutions in England that provide accommodation for their students on their own premises or arrange accommodation for their students to be provided elsewhere:

- alternative provision academies
- community, foundation and voluntary schools and community or foundation special schools
- registered independent schools
- non-maintained special schools
- pupil referral units
- institutions within the further education sector within the meaning of section 91 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992
- 16 to 19 academies

The Department for Education (DfE) previously wrote to schools and colleges about this exception, explaining amongst other things how the Secretary of State had confirmed that the exception applies, and also what arrangements for quarantine accommodation, transport from the port of entry to the quarantine accommodation and testing of those quarantining should be made.

# Travelling from or through red list countries: school regulation

Independent boarding schools are required to meet the [Independent School Standards](#). There is no disapplication of these requirements in relation to boarding school students quarantining having arrived from, or having travelled, through a red list country.

This includes the requirements in the Independent School Standards to have regard to [Keeping children safe in education](#) and [Working together to safeguard children](#). Other boarding schools are also required to have regard to [Keeping children safe in education](#) and [Working together to safeguard children](#) through separate legislation. All boarding schools are required to have regard to either the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools (NMS) (as applicable).

Specifically, the Independent School Standards require proprietors of independent boarding schools to ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of students and boarders accommodated at their school, to ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with, to ensure that students are properly supervised by staff and that the welfare of students is safeguarded by the effective implementation of risk assessment policies. Both sets of NMS contain standards relating to boarders' health and well-being and the safety of boarders or children.

DfE consider that a failure to have regard to the guidance in this document, or to follow it, may be indicative of a breach of any one or more of the Independent School Standards described above or of either set of NMS.

DfE will ask inspectorates to consider this guidance when assessing a boarding school's compliance with the relevant Independent School Standards or NMS. DfE intends to commission additional inspections of a sample of boarding schools while this guidance applies to check compliance.

If any independent school fails to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards, regulatory and enforcement action will be considered in line with the [Department for Education's Regulatory and enforcement action policy statement](#).

Boarding schools which are licensed student sponsors must continue to meet the requirements and duties set out in the [Student sponsor guidance](#). The Home Office will consider what action is appropriate, in accordance with the policy, if any regulatory action is taken by the DfE that indicates one or more of the sponsorship requirements or duties are not being met. This may include suspending or permanently removing a school's ability to sponsor student visas and child student visas.

# Travelling from or through red list countries: before travelling

Boarding schools need to have travel plans in place, including arrangements for the collection and transfer of boarding school students to the boarding facilities where they will quarantine. These need to be explained to boarding school students and their parents before they travel.

Boarding schools should send boarding school students returning from or through red list countries the following:

- a copy of the letter from the Department for Education to the school confirming that boarding school students are covered by an exception
- a letter from their school to the boarding school student meeting the requirements set out in the letter from the Department for Education to the school

Boarding school students should be ready to present both of these letters to UK Border Force officials on arrival.

Before travelling, boarding school students aged 5 or over must:

- book and pay for a travel test package, which will include coronavirus (COVID-19) tests to be taken on day 2 and day 8 of their quarantine
- complete a [passenger locator form](#) before arrival, with details of where they will quarantine, when they will arrive and the travel test package booking reference number. This should be completed in line with the DfE's letter to boarding schools which will confirm that these arrangements apply

In addition, before travelling, boarding school students aged 12 and over must take a coronavirus (COVID-19) test and get a negative result during the 2 days before they travel.

Boarding school students aged 12 or over must have proof of a [negative coronavirus test](#) when they arrive in England - this includes UK citizens. They must take the test in the 2 days before the service on which they will arrive in England is scheduled to depart. For example, if they travel directly to England on Friday, they must take the test on the Wednesday or Thursday. For pre-departure tests a boarding school student may take a PCR or a Lateral Flow test.

Boarding school students must book a travel test package. They must take a PCR COVID-19 test on or before day 2, after arrival in the UK, for variant surveillance and a PCR test on or after day 8 to check that they do not have coronavirus (COVID-19).

The day of arrival is considered day 0. Boarding school students should use the [booking portal](#) to book a travel test package to enter the UK.

[Guidance for boarding school students](#) is available.

# Travel to boarding school

Schedule 11 of the International Travel Regulations requires a boarding school student to travel directly to where they are quarantining using transport determined by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has determined that the transport must meet the following conditions: it must be a motor vehicle, it may not be public transport and it must be transport that has been pre-arranged by the school or college in England at which the student is due to attend as a student on their arrival in England.

There may be cases where the above requirements related to transportation cannot be met. In such cases, the DfE will need to be contacted well in advance of the boarding school student travelling, in order for bespoke arrangements to be made.

When arriving from a red list country, or having travelled through a red list country, in the 10 days before the day they arrive in England, boarding school students should be met at their port of entry by representatives of their boarding school and be transported directly to their boarding facility to isolate.

The boarding school representative should ensure they are at the port of entry in good time to pick up the arriving boarding school student(s). They should have proof of identification with them. If the representative has issues getting to the port of entry on time they should phone and advise the Managed Quarantine Operations Centre in accordance with the details in the DfE's letter to schools. This includes if there is a change in the school representative responsible for the boarding school student's pick up and transport after the school has issued its letter to the boarding school student. When they have arrived at the port of entry and are ready to pick up the boarding school student, they should go to the 'Managed Quarantine' collection point in the arrivals hall and once their identity has been confirmed the individual will be brought through to meet them.

The boarding school travel representative who is responsible for transport should ensure:

- appropriate social distancing (at least 2 metres) is maintained at all times
- children should wear face coverings (unless aged under 11 or otherwise exempt)
- good hand hygiene is maintained by ensuring a plentiful supply of alcohol hand gel
- if more than one child is travelling, the transport is of a size that will allow social distancing and ensure there is a seating plan with allocated seating
- in coaches, three rows of seats must be allowed between boarding school students and the driver
- good ventilation within the vehicle through open windows or effective air conditioning
- that transport does not stop at any services (including at request of passenger),

unless in an emergency such as fire

- where a long journey necessitates toilet breaks, these stops should be pre-arranged with facilities that should be exclusively for the use of the travelling boarding school student(s) for the duration of the stop and can be cleaned afterwards before being used again (schools may want to make arrangements with other schools to use facilities if needed on route)
- the destination school is notified around 20 minutes prior to arrival so they can prepare for the arrival
- children disembark in a socially distanced manner and are transferred to the care of school staff
- if more than one child has travelled pass the seating plan to the school for test and trace purposes

On arrival at the school, a one-way system should be established along paths that take boarding school students to the household areas where they will quarantine. School staff facilitating arrival should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times. A clear system should handle the arrival of multiple boarding school students at once and ensure strict social distancing. Boarding school students arriving from red list countries should be kept separate from boarding school students arriving from other countries and other students at all times. Boarding school students arriving at boarding schools at different times should not quarantine together.

## **Travelling from or through red list countries: quarantine in school boarding facilities**

Boarding school students arriving from red list countries, or having travelled through a red list country, in the 10 days before the day they arrive in England, must quarantine for at least 10 days on arrival in England (this requirement may be extended under circumstances set out below). Under the International Travel Regulations, this quarantine must be served in accommodation where the Secretary of State considers it is appropriate.

The Secretary of State has determined that in the case of boarding school students the quarantine is to take place in accommodation that comprises residential facilities organised by the school or college in England that the boarding school student is due to attend as a student . The accommodation must constitute separate accommodation meaning it must be accommodation that is physically self-contained.

For the purposes of quarantine, a mainstream boarding school is usually considered a 'household'. However, in the case of boarding school students travelling from red list countries there should, in effect, be a separate household



that can be physically isolated from the rest of the school. Each household should occupy part of the school site which is separated from the parts of the site used by other households for isolation and quarantine purposes and areas used by other staff and students. For example, households may occupy separate buildings or parts of buildings.

Boarding school students arriving from red list countries must quarantine in a separate household both from boarding school students required to quarantine who have come through non-red list countries and from students who are not required to quarantine. This allows multiple boarding school students arriving from (or having travelled through) red list countries to quarantine together in the same household. No member of a household may leave quarantine until all members of the household have met the criteria for ending quarantine set out below.

## **Residential facilities used for quarantine**

Rooms should have individual ventilation systems (for example, room or window fan coil units that do not recirculate to other parts of the building) or windows that open (safely).

Alternatively, the school should have a non-recirculating ventilation system that permits redirection of the air flow from areas outside the area in which a household is quarantining into the area in which a household is quarantining.

The school should put in place COVID secure arrangements to bring meals and other essential commodities, such as toiletries, to the area where quarantine is occurring.

The school should put in place COVID secure arrangements for cleaning rooms, changing bedding, handling laundry and disposing of waste.

The school should ensure quarantining red list households use separate bathrooms from the rest of the school and make sure all boarding school students have their own individual towels, both for drying after bathing or showering and for hand-hygiene purposes.

## **Travelling from or through red list countries: supervising and supporting boarding school students during quarantine**

Schools should provide appropriate information to boarding school students about



how they need to behave while in quarantine and how they will access services and can contact staff when help is required.

Schools should:

- ensure boarding school students follow the guidance [How to quarantine when they arrive in England](#)
- ensure boarding school students are supervised such that there is no opportunity to leave their household area, except where carefully supervised to ensure no contact with individuals from outside their household and staff responsible for the supervision and care of the household
- put in place arrangements for the oversight of boarding school students in quarantine that protect the safety and welfare of all students and staff, minimising the school staff who interact with the boarding school students
- provide boarding school students with clear rules (based on this guidance) as to what is expected and acceptable during their quarantine period including a clear statement of the area that the boarding school students are allowed to occupy (e.g. an area including their room and toilet/bathroom facilities that are for the use of red list quarantining boarding school students and no-one else)
- provide boarding school students with as much information as will be helpful for them to understand the practicalities of being in quarantine such as arrangements for meals, room cleaning, disposing of rubbish, laundry, process for requesting and enjoying outdoor exercise and emergency procedures. Rules and information should be provided verbally and in writing
- provide alcohol gel for each boarding school student, with advice on how to use the gels and the risk of ingestion and flammability of the gel
- have procedures in place, agreed in advance with parents, setting out what it will do in the case of an emergency

The school should also put in place appropriate arrangements for the collection and treatment of laundry and waste from each quarantining household. This should prevent unnecessary contact between staff and members of the household. These arrangements should include:

- staff should wear appropriate PPE (masks, aprons, gloves, eye protection etc) when handling laundry from quarantining boarding school students. Laundry should be treated as infectious and double bagged, should be tagged with the care area and date, and stored in a designated, safe lockable area while awaiting laundering. Hot wash at 60°C
- all consumable waste items that have been in contact with quarantining boarding school students, including used tissues, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag, double bagged and tied. This should be disposed of with normal household rubbish after a wait of 24 hours

## **Exercise and fresh air**

Boarding school students may leave the place in which they are quarantining for exercise only under staff supervision. School staff should ensure that boarding school students within a quarantining household do not come into contact with any individuals from outside the boarding school students' household or staff supervising and providing care to their household.

## Testing boarding school students

A boarding school student's arrival date in England is counted as day 0. Testing must take place on or before day 2 and on or after day 8.

Boarding school staff should collect new test kits when boarding school students arrive and put them in storage (ensuring storage is at an appropriate temperature: 5°C to 22°C). Schools should have a plan setting out which boarding school student will receive test kits on which day.

When required, school staff should collect test kits from storage and deliver them to boarding school students within their household accommodation. After boarding school students have completed the test, school staff should collect the test kit and put it into a box which should be closed and sealed for transport. They should not handle the test kit further before collection when they should be passed to the courier.

Boarding school students should normally complete the test themselves, following the instructions. School staff should familiarise themselves with test-kit instructions so that they can provide appropriate support for boarding school students where necessary.

## Visitors to boarding school students in quarantine

Boarding school students in quarantine from red list countries should not receive visitors, except in exceptional circumstances. If it is necessary for social workers, other children's social care staff, medical staff or other professionals to engage with a child they should consider in the first instance if this can be done so remotely and where this is not possible or appropriate, they should follow the [Use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care](#) guidance when making any unavoidable visits.

## Leaving quarantine under exceptional

# circumstances

Boarding school students must not leave the place where they are quarantining until their quarantine has ended (see below), except on any of the grounds set out in paragraph 13(1) of Schedule 11 to the International Travel Regulations.

These include the boarding school student leaving to:

- fulfil a legal obligation (for example, to attend court)
- seek medical assistance where this is required urgently or on the advice of a registered medical practitioner
- avoid injury, illness or escape a risk of harm (for example situations such as fire or flooding or where there is a risk of abuse) or
- access critical public services including social services or services provided to victims (for example critical access such as for a child to see their social worker)

In the case of some of the other grounds (related to exercise, visiting a person who appears to be dying and attendance at a funeral), prior permission (“a required prior permission”) needs to be given by a person authorised by the Secretary of State. Where appropriate, the DfE has written or will write to schools granting authorisations to give required prior permissions.

## Ending quarantine

If a boarding school student has quarantined for 10 full days (the day of arrival in England is day 0), received a negative result to both the day 2 and day 8 tests and does not have symptoms of COVID-19, they may leave the place where they are quarantining, unless anyone in their household has symptoms or has tested positive.

If any household member receives a positive COVID-19 test, they and their household must extend the quarantine period for a further 10 days (the new day 0 is the day the household member developed symptoms or tested positive). If additional household members test positive, the household must restart the quarantine period again. The only people who do not have to restart their quarantine when someone tests positive are household members who have already tested positive during the quarantine period. If a household member has already tested positive during the quarantine period, they need to complete their restarted 10 days and do not need to extend their quarantine again if they or someone else tests positive.

If a boarding school student has not taken a day 8 test or the results of this test have not arrived, they must quarantine for 14 full days, or until the delayed test arrives, if sooner (where day 0 is the day of arrival). The entire household must

also quarantine for the full quarantine period.

If the boarding school student has not received their day 8 test, or they need help with their order, they should contact the helpline provided in the [booking portal guidance](#).

Once quarantine is over, boarding school students are no longer required to meet the restrictions set out in this guidance. However, schools should continue to manage all boarding school students in line with the [Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak](#) guidance.

## **Travelling from or through red list countries: risk assessments**

Schools will need to undertake their own risk assessments about how to quarantine boarding school students safely. Schools should have regard to [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) in planning for the quarantine of arriving boarding school students. For example, fire safety risk assessments should be updated to consider the need for social distancing on evacuation and risk assessments in completing emergency repairs and maintenance should consider the need for social distancing. Schools can seek advice from their local [health protection team](#) if needed.

## **Travelling from or through red list countries: school staff**

Households in residential settings, in contrast with other households, will almost always need to have staff and other professionals arriving and leaving during the period of self-isolation or quarantine.

Where possible, residential settings should operate a consistent staff rota to minimise the risk of transmission. The rota should avoid individual staff having contact with multiple isolating or quarantining households. If any household within the setting is self-isolating or quarantining, staff should follow careful infection control measures during and after visits, in the same way as any self-isolating household would if they had unavoidable visitors.

Staff who are non-resident, visiting or partially resident and who travel between an affected setting and their own home will need to pay particular attention to careful infection prevention and control, including social distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene.

Any staff member who develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), or has

someone in their household who has developed symptoms, should follow [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).

School staff working with boarding school students who are in quarantine after arriving from red list countries will be supplied with LFD test kits to self-swab and test themselves once per day at home. Staff must report their result to NHS Test and Trace as soon as the test is completed either online or by telephone as per the instructions in the home test kit. Staff should also share their result, whether void, positive or negative, with their school to help with contact tracing.

Staff with a positive LFD test result will need to self-isolate in line with the stay-at-home guidance. They will also need to arrange a PCR test to confirm the result.

Those with a negative LFD test result can continue to attend school and use protective measures.

School staff working with boarding school students who are in quarantine after arriving from red list countries will be supplied with test kits to undertake a PCR test once a week and submit it for analysis in accordance with the instructions once per week.

You should refer to the [Use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care](#) in relation to all engagement with boarding school students in quarantine. This includes arrangements where a child or young person showing symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) requires staff contact for personal care.

## Travelling from or through red list countries: education

Where schools wish to commence the education of any quarantining boarding school students, this may only be done where it would be consistent with the boarding school student maintaining their quarantine (such as through remote learning).

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1. These regulations and this guidance only apply to pupils attending boarding schools in England. However other administrations in the UK have parallel law and guidance in place. [↩](#)

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