

## Summary of Self-Isolation Period and Guidance Changes: Schools

From Monday 17 January, the 10-day self-isolation period for people who have tested positive for COVID-19 was reduced to 5 full days in most cases.

It is known that two thirds of people are not infectious after five full days of isolation. The new self-isolation changes enable more people to return seeks to strike a balance to minimise the spread of the virus, whilst enabling as many non-infectious people as possible to go about their lives and return to their work, education or other activities earlier.

Anyone in England who tests positive for COVID-19 is now advised that they can leave self-isolation before the end of the full 10 days if they:

- Take an LFD test on two consecutive days, no earlier than the fifth full day of their self-isolation period (not counting the 'symptom onset day' or the test date for asymptomatic cases, which is counted as Day 0).
- The second LFD test should be taken the next day (aim to test between 12 hours and 24 hours later).
- The results obtained from the LFD tests on **both** days must be negative and the case **must not have a high temperature**
- This also applies to children under 5, with LFD testing at parental or guardian discretion.
- If both these test results are negative, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to your education or childcare setting from day 6.

If **both** LFD test results are negative and the positive case **does not** have a high temperature, it is likely they were not infectious at the time the tests were taken and **isolation can be ended after the second negative test result**. The child/staff member can return immediately to the workplace or school setting. Thus, if a positive case takes an LFD test on Day 5 of isolation, which is negative, and another on Day 6 which also returns a negative result, the pupil/staff member can attend work /school that day.

To further reduce the chance of passing COVID-19 on to others, those leaving self-isolation early are **strongly advised** to:

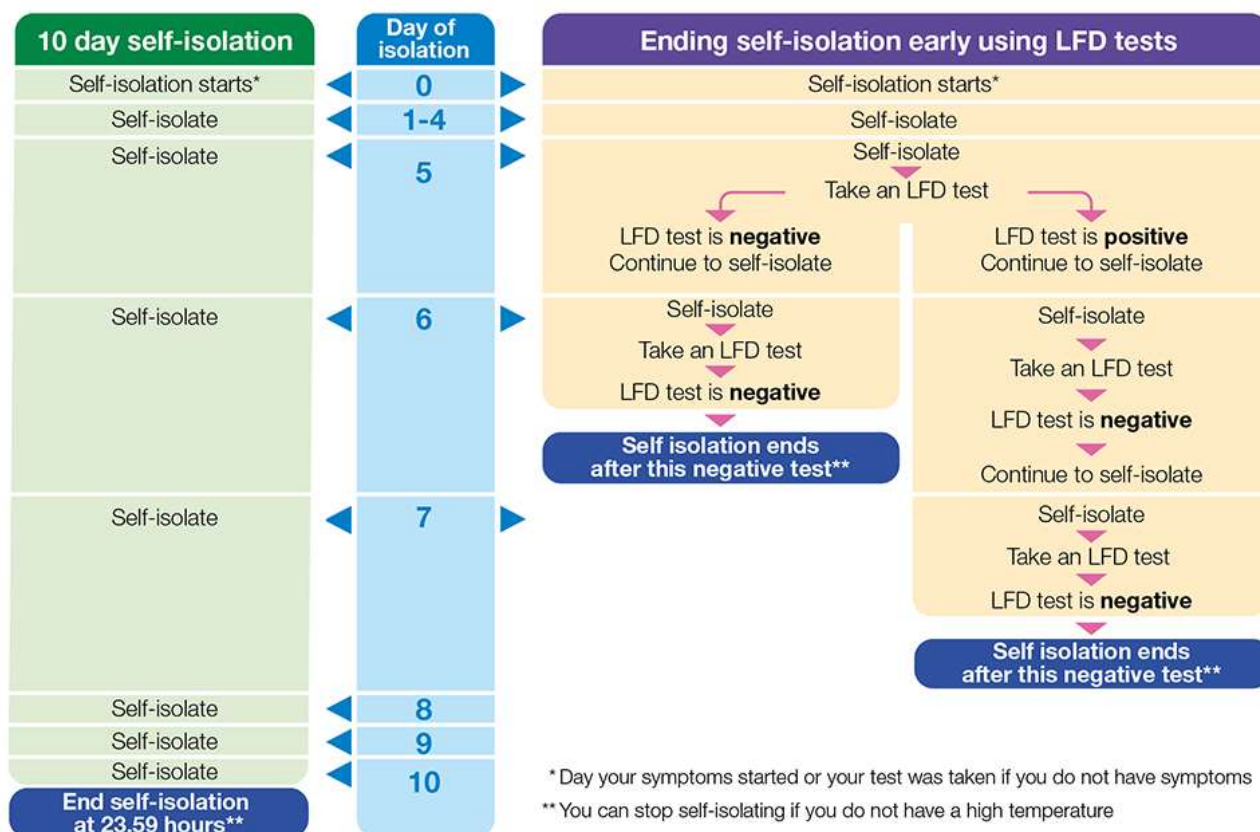
- ✓ limit close contact with other people outside their household, especially in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces
- ✓ work from home if it is possible
- ✓ wear a face covering in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces and where they are in close contact with other people
- ✓ limit contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19
- ✓ follow the [guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread](#)

**Anyone ending their self-isolation following 2 negative LFD test results, taken on two consecutive days, from Day 5 should follow this advice until 10 full days from when the self-isolation period started.**

Positive cases who are not released from self-isolation early should not take any more LFD tests after the 10th day of their isolation period and can stop self-isolating after this day. This is because they are unlikely to be infectious after the 10th day of their isolation period. Even if they have a positive LFD test result on the 10th day of their self-isolation period, they should not take any more LFD tests after this day. If the positive case is concerned, they may choose to keep following the above advice until 14 days after the start of their self-isolation period. Those who continue to feel unwell after the 10 days period should seek medical advice.

**It is important to note that those working in health and social care**, must follow the relevant guidance for this sector. They must speak to their manager about any household case or their own positive result. [COVID-19: management of staff and exposed patients or residents in health and social care settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## Examples of when to end self-isolation if you have had COVID-19 symptoms or have received a positive COVID-19 test result



### What happens if you are already in self-isolation on the 17 January 2022?

Positive cases who started their self-isolation prior to the 17 January 2022 can undertake LFD tests on consecutive days from Day 5, and if these tests are negative and they do not have a high temperature they can leave isolation. Where a case is already on day 6 on the 17 January 2022, they will still need two negative LFD tests on consecutive days to be able to leave self-isolation early.

### What happens if the Day 5 test is positive?

The positive case must continue to isolate until they receive two consecutive negative LFD test results taken 24 hours apart e.g., Days 6 and 7, when they can return to work/school. They can leave self-isolation after 10 full if they do not return two consecutive LFD test results earlier.

## What if symptoms develop during isolation?

If you are self-isolating because of a positive test result but did not have any symptoms, and you develop COVID-19 symptoms within your self-isolation period, you **do not** need to start a new self-isolation period.

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms at any point after ending your first period of self-isolation the positive case should follow the steps in the [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection) again.

## Example of how to calculate release from self-isolation

For example, if first symptoms started on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month (Day 0) or if asymptomatic, the date of test, the case may take two daily LFD tests from the 20<sup>th</sup> (Day 5). If LFD test results are negative on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, and they do not have a high temperature, then the case may end their isolation period after the negative test result on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

## Further Detailed Questions and Answers

Questions	Answers
I have claimed the Test and Trace Isolation Payment. Will I be eligible for the full amount if my isolation ends on day 6?	Yes, you may still be eligible for the full amount of the Test and Trace Support Payment
What do you mean by 'a day apart'?	Your two negative test results should be from tests taken on consecutive calendar days. You should aim to take these tests 12-24 hours apart.
I have completed 5 full days isolation and obtained 2 negative LFD tests on Day 5 and Day 6. What do I need to do around other people?	<p>If both your LFD test results are negative, it is likely that you were not infectious at the time the tests were taken and you can end your isolation. To further reduce the chance of passing COVID-19 on to others, you are strongly advised to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• limit close contact with other people outside your household, especially in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces</li><li>• work from home if you can</li><li>• wear a face covering in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces and where you are in close contact with other people</li><li>• limit contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• follow the <a href="#">guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread</a></li> </ul> <p>If you end your self-isolation following 2 negative LFD test results on consecutive days, from Day 5 you should follow this advice until 10 full days from when your self-isolation period started.</p>
How can I report my LFD test result?	<p>For every test that you take, you should report your LFD result via this gov.uk page: <a href="#">Report a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test result - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>Participants can contact 119 if they need support reporting their results and for language support if English is not their first language.</p> <p>It is important to report your result even if it is negative or invalid so that the numbers of positive results being reported against the total number of tests being taken can be tracked. This helps The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) spot patterns and identify outbreaks more quickly. If people only report positive results, virus case levels can look higher than they really are. So even if your test is negative or void, make sure you report it right away.</p>
What proof can schools ask to see for positive cases ending their self-isolation period early?	<p>Schools cannot ask to see proof of two consecutive negative tests and must trust parents/carers not to send their children to school if they have not completed the self-isolation period required. Schools should encourage parents/carers/staff to report their LFD result at: <a href="#">Report a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test result - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a> or call 119 if they need support to do so.</p>
I have completed 5 full days of isolation, my day 5 and day 6 LFD tests are negative. Will I be fined if I leave isolation now?	<p>If both your LFD tests are taken from Day 5 and the next day are negative, you <b>will not</b> be fined if you leave self-isolation.</p>
My LFD test is positive, what do I do?	<p>If the day 5 test is positive, you must continue to isolate.</p> <p>You can take further tests on subsequent days – Day 6, 7, 8 or 9. If two LFD tests taken on consecutive days are negative, you can leave self-isolation immediately on receipt of the second negative result.</p>

	Self-isolation ends after Day 10, you <b>do not</b> need a negative LFD test on Day 10 to leave isolation.
I have tested positive by LFD; do I need to do a confirmatory PCR test now?	<p>From 11/01/22 those returning a positive LFD test result are no longer required to get a confirmatory PCR test but must isolate and follow <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection">Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>You do not need to take a follow-up PCR test, <b>unless</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you wish to claim the <a href="#">Test and Trace Support Payment</a> – to claim the Test and Trace Support Payment, you must have tested positive for COVID-19 following a PCR test or an assisted LFD test</li> <li>• you have received <a href="#">an email or letter</a> from the NHS because of a health condition that means you may be suitable for new COVID-19 treatments – if this applies to you and you develop any COVID-19 symptoms, you should use the PCR test kit that was sent to you in the post for this purpose; if you have not received a PCR test kit you can <a href="#">arrange to have a PCR test</a></li> <li>• you are taking LFD tests as part of research or surveillance programmes, and the programme asks you to take a follow-up PCR test</li> <li>• you have a positive day 2 LFD test result <a href="#">after you arrive in England</a></li> </ul>
I had no symptoms when I tested positive, I have since developed symptoms and my Day 5 LFD test is negative. What do I do?	<p>If you are self-isolating because of a positive test result but did not have any symptoms and have then gone on to develop these within the self-isolation period, you <b>do not</b> need to start a new self-isolation period.</p> <p>If your test result is negative on Day 5 and Day 6 you can return to work/school on Day 6 <b>provided you do not have a high temperature</b>. You can return to work or school when you have two consecutive day negative test results, and your temperature is normal.</p> <p>Positive cases who are not released from self-isolation early, should not take any more LFD tests after the 10th day of their isolation period and can stop self-isolating after this day. If they remain ill after this point, they should seek medical advice.</p>



<p>I have completed 5 days isolation; I have had 2 negative LFD tests on day 5 and day 6. Can I return to work/school?</p>	<p>You can return to work/school following your two negative test results, if they were taken on consecutive days (ideally 12-24 hours apart), you <b>do not</b> have a high temperature, and your employer (as relevant) is in agreement. To further reduce the chance of passing COVID-19 on to others, you are strongly advised to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limit close contact with other people outside your household, especially in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces</li> <li>• work from home if you can</li> <li>• wear a face covering in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces and where you are in close contact with other people</li> <li>• limit contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19</li> <li>• <a href="#">guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread</a></li> </ul> <p>If you end your self-isolation following 2 negative LFD test results, on consecutive days, taken from Day 5 you should follow this advice until 10 full days from when your self-isolation period started.</p>
<p>My child is under five can they leave isolation if they complete LFD tests on Day 5 and Day 6?</p>	<p>If your child under five tests positive, they are required to self-isolate for 10 days.</p> <p>Please note that LFD testing is not recommended on children under 5 years. However, at parent or guardian discretion they can participate in testing to leave self-isolation early if they do not have a high temperature.</p> <p>Your child will be able to undertake LFD tests on consecutive days from Day 5 and if these tests are negative and they do not have a high temperature they will be able to leave isolation.</p> <p>If parent or guardian decides not to carry out LFD testing, then they should continue with their self-isolation for the full 10 days.</p>
<p>Do I have to show my negative tests to my employer to return to work?</p>	<p>Workers are legally required to tell their employers when they have a legal duty to self-isolate if they cannot work from home. However, there is no obligation for them to show their test results to their employer.</p>

	<p>If, on day 6 of the self-isolation period, an individual has had two negative LFD results, taken a day apart, and <b>does not</b> have a high temperature, it will be at their discretion whether to return to work before the end of the 10-day period. Employers <b>cannot</b> demand workers return before the end of this period.</p> <p>It is important that those who are likely to be still infectious remain at home self-isolating.</p>
What does this mean for high-risk sectors, such as the NHS and social care?	There is specific guidance for health and care settings which must be followed.
What does this mean for international arrivals?	Travel rules remain unchanged for international arrivals. If eligible, fully vaccinated arrivals who test positive on their day 2 test can leave self-isolation on day 6 of their self-isolation period if they have had two consecutive negative LFD tests taken a day apart.
I am isolating because I have tested positive for COVID-19; I do not have any LFD test kits. What do I do?	<p>If you do not have any LFDs at home, you can get further supplies for home delivery at <a href="#">Order coronavirus (COVID-19) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a> or by ringing 119 if you are having difficulty accessing these.</p> <p>The full self-isolation period continues to be 10 days. You should only leave self-isolation early – from day 6 onwards – when you have had two negative LFD tests taken a day apart and do not have a high temperature. Two negative tests are essential to make sure those allowed to leave self-isolation early are unlikely to still be infectious.</p> <p>If you are unable to obtain LFD test kits, to complete the LFD tests from Day 5, you <b>must</b> complete the full self-isolation period of 10 days.</p>
Are school staff who have tested positive by PCR in the last 90 days still advised to take part in twice weekly LFD testing and daily testing when identified as a close contact of a positive case?	<p>Yes – The DfE advises that; Even if someone has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90days, if they are identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19 and are exempt from isolation, they are <b>strongly advised</b> to take part in daily testing.</p> <p>If they test positive the staff member must then follow the <a href="#">Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>.</p>



“This is a change to the previous position because we know people can be infected with Omicron even when they have had previous covid infection. Previously, we had evidence that people were likely to be immune for at least 90 days after infection, but we don’t know whether this is the case with Omicron. With the removal of the requirement for self-isolation, we need another system to try to reduce transmission. Given that there is much less likelihood of false positives with LFDs when someone is no longer infectious, the balance of risks means that we need to implement this, even in the 90 days after previous infection.”

The DfE encourage staff to continue to undertake twice weekly LFD testing, within the 90-day period of a previous infection with COVID-19. Whilst no timeframe for re-commencing testing after the infectious period is given in the guidance, staff are advised to take a **short** break from twice weekly testing after the default 10 days self-isolation period, to reduce the potential of them continuing to test positive after day 10.

## Close Contacts

There has not been any change in guidance for close contacts of a positive case.

### Unvaccinated Household Contacts

Unvaccinated household contacts are legally required to self-isolate for 10 days.

The 10-day isolation period starts from the day after the case had symptoms, or if no symptoms the day after the case's positive test.

### Double vaccinated contacts

Double vaccinated (plus 14 days after the second dose), those between 5 and age 18 years and 6 months, those who are unable to have a vaccine due to a medical condition and those who are part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial close contacts do not need to isolate and are advised to take daily LFD tests for 7 days. They should continue to attend their setting as normal unless they have a positive test result.

Children under 5 years are exempt from close contact self-isolation and do not need to take part in daily testing of close contacts.

A further PCR test is not recommended within 90 days after a positive PCR test result unless you have new symptoms.

## Access to LFDs

Occasionally there are supply issues for obtaining LFTs for home use. The usual channels to access these are as follows. Where problems are experienced, the public are advised to keep checking locally or online to obtain supplies:

- Go online to order for home delivery [Order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests)
- Access LFD Home Test kits at [Find where to get rapid lateral flow tests - NHS \(test-and-trace.nhs.uk\)](https://test-and-trace.nhs.uk) by putting in your postcode to find your nearest pharmacy. Alternatively call into a local pharmacy and ask if they have any LFD home test kits.
- Go online and put in your personal details and you receive a 'collect code' which you give to the pharmacist to receive a free home test kits which contains 7 daily tests. <https://test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/collect-lateral-flow-kits>. This quickens up the process for people if they want to use this method. Anyone needing a code to access LFDs at the pharmacy can get one of these by calling 119 (free from landlines and mobiles. Lines are open from 7am to 11pm.)

**18/01/2022**