



## Adult Social Care, Public Health & Hub

Date 04 April 2022  
Ref: STG/vt/kk010422SS  
Phone number Telephone: 01922 658065  
Email: [walsall.healthprotection@nhs.net](mailto:walsall.healthprotection@nhs.net)

Dear Parents / Carers

### **RE: Living Safely with COVID-19 – Changes to COVID-19 guidance (1 April 2022)**

The Government has outlined further steps as part of their 'Living with COVID-19' strategy, including the announcement of the end of free COVID-19 testing for the majority of the population.

Although we will no longer be testing as frequently, it does not mean the virus has gone away. Now more than ever, we need to remain vigilant. Our COVID-19 rates in the borough have continued to rise over the last few weeks. The rate is now over 600 per 100K of the population, meaning over 1,700 residents tested positive last week.

It is even more important that we focus on the other ways we can help keep each other safe. We all need to continue to make careful and considerate decisions to help limit the spread of infection amongst our communities.

#### **1. Please continue to keep your child(ren) off school if they are unwell or have symptoms of COVID-19**

- **Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people.**
- It is particularly important to avoid close contact with anyone who you know is at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell if they are infected with COVID-19.
- It is recommended children and young people wait at least 48 hours (about 2 days) after the symptoms have stopped before allowing them to return to school, college, or childcare.
- You should make sure they feel well enough to resume normal activities and they no longer have a high temperature.

#### **2. If you are an adult, please continue to stay at home if you are unwell or have symptoms of COVID-19**

- **Adults with symptoms of a respiratory infection, and who have a high temperature or feel unwell, should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.**
- It is particularly important to avoid close contact with anyone who you know is at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell if they are infected with COVID-19.

- It is recommended adults wait until at least 48 hours (about 2 days) after the symptoms have stopped before they go back to work or meet with other people. They should make sure they feel well enough to resume normal activities and they no longer have a high temperature.

### **3. If a person can still access COVID-19 testing, they should stay at home if testing positive**

- Adults who have access to COVID testing and have a positive COVID-19 test result should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days, which is when they are most infectious.
- For children and young people aged 18 and under, the advice is 3 days.

Read more information on what to do if you have symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19, or a positive COVID-19 test:

<https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2022/04/01/what-to-do-if-you-have-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19-or-a-positive-covid-19-test/>

### **4. Please continue to support your nursery, school or college to help keep your child(ren) safe**

Nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges have been asked to continue maintaining prevention measures in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses being passed on to others. Please continue to support our education settings by adhering to these.

### **5. Please continue to follow the safer public health behaviours to help stop COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses from spreading**

- Get vaccinated – protect yourself and others
- Stay home if you are feeling unwell, have symptoms or test positive
- Ventilate your space – ventilate and let fresh air in
- Wear a face covering – especially around those who are not part of your household
- Wash your hands regularly – for at least 20 seconds

By continuing to take precautions, you can reduce the risk of spreading the virus to others, especially those who are more vulnerable to serious illness.

### **6. Please get vaccinated and boosted**

Thanks to the success of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, we can feel more confident in our ability to live more safely with COVID-19. It offers the best protection to those who have taken it and completed their vaccination course – first, second, third if required, and booster doses. The offer of the vaccine remains, and it is never too late to come forward.

From 4 April 2022, children aged 5 to 11 years of age who live in Walsall or the Black Country will be able to get the COVID-19 vaccine. 12- to 15-year-olds can continue to access the vaccine. Vaccinations will take place outside of school in the Saddlers Vaccination Centre (Saddlers Centre, Bridgeman Street, Walsall). Parents and carers should shortly receive a letter from the NHS with further information. Online bookings for 5–11-year-olds will open on 2 April.

Find out more on the online booking system: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination>

The public health team continues to monitor COVID-19 closely. Should there be a need for us to step up our efforts and support due to major outbreaks, steep increase in, case numbers or hospitalisations, we have plans in place to ensure we are ready to do so.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely



**Stephen Gunther**  
**Director of Public Health**