

10th December 2021

On Wednesday 8th December, the Prime Minister announced the implementation of [Plan B of the COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan](#), to reduce pressure on the NHS. Plan B sets out a number of additional measures across society to control transmission of COVID-19.

The Government is clear on the critical importance of not disrupting the education of children and young people and will prioritise keeping all education and childcare settings open, and has instructed schools and colleges not to move to remote learning. The government have therefore provided us with the following updated guidance which will apply to LDE UTC to support this effort:

COVID testing and start of term arrangements

The government have recently asked all secondary schools and UTCs to provide an on-site test for pupils on return in January. This will follow a similar process to the return testing in September. Testing in college helps to boost participation and will help reduce transmission after a period of mixing over the holidays. This will take place on the first few days of term, and we will be in touch shortly with further details on this. We will need to gain consent before undertaking this on-site test.

If you/your child is 16 or over, they should give consent themselves, after discussing it with a parent (if under 18). If you/your child is under 16, then parental consent is required. In either case, please visit our COVID Response Home Page (tinyurl.com/LDECOVIDHUB) and click the purple button which says, "Consent to Rapid Testing", this will then guide you through the short consent process. Please do this, even if you have given consent in the past. It should take no longer than 3 minutes.

LDE UTC staff and apprentice learners should take one self-test at home either the evening or morning before they return in January.

Attendance

College attendance remains mandatory, and all the usual rules continue to apply. Enabling children and young people to attend their education setting regularly continues to be a national priority. As usual, schools/colleges are able to grant leaves of absence for pupils in exceptional circumstances.

Face coverings

Face coverings should be worn by learners, staff and visitors in communal areas, unless exempt. This is a temporary measure. Face coverings must continue to be worn when travelling on public transport to and from college.

The government is not currently recommending face coverings during lessons, however LDE UTC does encourage anyone who would like to wear a face covering during lessons to do so.

Working from home

The government has issued [guidance](#) that from Monday 13th December, office workers in England are advised to work from home where this is possible to do so. The government has made it clear that they expect all education and childcare settings, including further and higher education providers, to continue to provide face-to-face teaching, and staff should continue to attend their place of work if

required in order to deliver this. Teaching and learning should not be moved online as a result of the work from home guidance, therefore staff need to continue to work on-site as per their usual working schedule. If you have concerns regarding this, please do discuss with your line manager in the first instance and contact HR.

Home Testing

We strongly encourage all learners and staff to continue regular home testing and reporting their results. Please visit tinyurl.com/LDECOVIDHUB and click "Tell us your Home test result" for more information. We will also be asking any parents, guardians and other visitors to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test before entering the setting.

During the Christmas break all staff and students should test over the holidays in line with national guidance. This means that they should test if they will be in a high-risk situation that day and before visiting people who are at higher risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19.

After the Christmas break, and the initial "on return" testing, all learners and staff should continue to take twice weekly home tests as they do now.

Clubs and Societies

Schools and colleges should continue to offer their usual before and after-school activities. These activities promote the wellbeing of children and young people and provide vital opportunities for our learners to enhance their future employability. As such LDE UTC will continue its clubs and societies as normal.

Isolation

All individuals who have been identified as a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, irrespective of vaccination status and age, will continue to be required to self-isolate and asked to book a PCR test.

We have updated the latest version of our COVID risk assessment and plans, please visit our COVID response home page to view these documents (visit <https://www.ldeutc.co.uk/key-info/college-life/coronavirus-covid-19.aspx>).

I will be in touch again next week, with an end of term letter, in the meantime if I could ask you to kindly complete the consent form for on-site COVID testing as soon as possible that will greatly aid our planning for the start of next term.

Yours sincerely,



Geoffrey Fowler
CEO & Principal