

**By email**[www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net)

03 November 2021

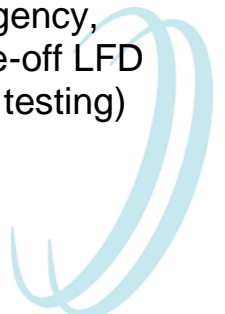
Dear Principal

The Department of Health has updated contact tracing arrangements for schools, which have been implemented by the Public Health Agency (PHA) with effect from 1st November. The changes are largely to the advice on testing that will be provided to **Post Primary Pupils** and **fully vaccinated staff in Special schools** by the PHA Contact Tracing Centre (CTC) if they are identified as a **Household Close Contact** and which will provide an additional safety measure for all staff and pupils in these settings.

This additional testing is advised but is not mandatory.

From 1st November the following changes have been implemented:

- Daily Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing will be recommended for **Post Primary School pupils** who are identified by PHA as **household** close contacts. The tests should be taken before going to school each day in the period following receipt of their initial negative PCR test result (which enables a return to school) up until receipt of a negative Day 8 PCR;
- Daily LFD will be recommended for **fully vaccinated staff in special schools** who are identified by PHA as **household** close contacts. The tests should be undertaken each day before going to school in the period following receipt of a negative initial PCR test result up until receipt of a negative Day 8 PCR.
- In the event of an **outbreak/cluster** in a post primary school setting, and following a risk assessment and advice from the Public Health Agency, pupils and staff in an identified group may be asked to take a one-off LFD test (in addition to their ongoing LFD twice weekly asymptomatic testing)



prior to returning to class. **This will replace the existing recommendation to undertake a one-off PCR test in such circumstances.**

All pupils and staff who have a positive LFD test should stay at home, self-isolate and book a PCR test. Please see [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): self-isolating | nidirect](#) for guidance on whether other people in their household also need to self-isolate if the Lateral Flow test result is positive.

Post-primary pupils and special school staff will be encouraged to get their supply of tests for this purpose from local pharmacies, the Lateral Flow Device (LFD) direct postal service, or from local walk through test sites, but we recognise that pupils who already have school-provided test kits in their homes for use in the regular asymptomatic LFD testing programme might use those for convenience, and if so schools may be asked by pupils to replenish their regular testing kits more frequently.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Bergin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

**Dr Stephen Bergin**  
**Director of Public Health and Medical Director (Interim)**