



# COVID-19

## early outbreak management

### Higher education

#### Who should use this information?

Leadership and management of higher education (HE) providers. This information provides key steps to quickly identify and contain any potential COVID-19 outbreak. If there's an outbreak at privately owned accommodation, the person(s) responsible for the accommodation should inform the relevant university(ies) and follow the steps outlined. If you are concerned about other possible health issues then you should follow your existing processes.

**National Restrictions began in England from 5 November 2020.** [Find out about the new restrictions and what you can and cannot do.](#) For England only.

#### What you can do to manage a possible outbreak

##### Confirm

Staff and pupils must not come into the setting if they have symptoms. If you are informed about a case or cases, check whether they have had a test (**Box 1**). <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

If tested negative and are well, they can return to the education setting.

If tested positive, they must isolate for 10 days from the day they were tested. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

##### Contacts

Identify any close contacts of the case when confirmed using **Box 2**.

Remember, contact might occur when travelling or on breaks. Talk to the case and make a full list. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person>

##### Check

Check your setting. Refer to DfE Higher Education guidance which sets out the actions settings/providers should take to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) within their setting. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses>

##### Call

Call your local PHE Health Protection Team but only if you need additional advice or support.

Upon notification to your PHE HPT, if you are advised to partially or fully close the building, you should notify the Department for Education via the [Education Setting Status](#) form.

There are some circumstances when the PHE HPT would like you to call them (see **Box 3**). <https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team>

## Box 1. Symptoms check list

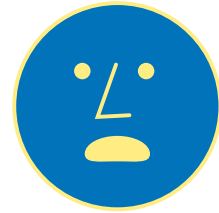
The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:



a high temperature – hot to touch on your chest or back (no need to measure your temperature)



a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours



a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means that it is different to normal

## Box 2. Identifying contacts

A 'contact' is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 anytime from 2 days before the person was symptomatic up to 10 days from onset of symptoms. For example, a contact in the setting can be:

- a person who has had face-to-face contact (within 1 metre), with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, including:
  - being coughed on
  - having a face-to-face conversation within 1 metre
  - having physical contact, or
  - contact within 1 metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- a person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for more than 15 minutes
- a person who has travelled in a small vehicle with someone who has tested positive or in a large vehicle or plane near someone who has tested positive

The only exception is if the person was wearing appropriate personal protective equipment at the time of contact.

## Box 3. When to call your local Health Protection Team

- number of cases exceeds 5 within 14 days
- you've taken the action outlined but are still seeing more cases
- you're thinking you might need to close because of the number of people affected
- somebody in your education setting has been admitted to hospital; You're getting significant interest from local media

**To access more information refer to the guidance below or search the titles on GOV.UK:**

- [guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection who do not live with the person](#)
- [COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#)
- [coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers](#)
- [further and higher education: COVID-19](#)
- [coronavirus: travel guidance for educational settings](#)