

A SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOLS

The Island's schools and UCM will maintain proportionate protective measures this term, in order to keep students and staff safe, in line with Public Health advice.

These measures are in place to help keep our Island's schools and college open for face-to-face education. While the risk of COVID-19 cannot be dismissed, our aim is to help students, staff and parents return to school confidently and happily – with a sense of wellbeing and excitement, not anxiety.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW WILL SCHOOLS BE KEPT COVID SAFE THIS YEAR?

All of the Island's schools and UCM have carefully considered protective measures that keep staff and students safe, whilst maintaining access to education and social interaction as much as possible.

Schools and UCM have undertaken thorough risk assessments and have implemented measures to support HANDS, FACE, SPACE and FRESH AIR.

There will be increased ventilation and extra hand hygiene precautions in place. Carbon dioxide monitors will also be used in some settings to monitor air quality.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A STUDENT TESTS POSITIVE?

If a student tests positive once the school year starts, they will be required to isolate at home for 10 days, in line with current Public Health advice.

The student or their parents will be asked about any close contacts (those that they have come into face to face contact with for a cumulative period of 15 minutes or more) at school, or anywhere else. Schools may be asked to help in identifying close contacts.

This year, close contacts, including classmates and siblings, will not need to self-isolate, however they may be asked to used LFD tests and take extra precautions to monitor for symptoms of COVID-19.

WILL STUDENTS BE TESTED?

Primary school students do not need to take LFD tests unless they are identified as a close contact.

Secondary and UCM students, and staff across all schools, are **strongly encouraged** to take two LFD tests each week at home.

Around one in three people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms but can still infect others. LFD tests have been instrumental in identifying more than 65% of cases in the Isle of Man within the last fortnight. Early identification is really important in protecting our Island.

HOW DO I ACCESS LFD TESTS FOR ME AND MY FAMILY?

LFD test kits are now available to everyone in the Isle of Man, free of charge.

You can collect lateral flow kits from any participating pharmacy, or order online at gov.im/covid19

WHAT IF MY CHILD RETURNS A POSITIVE LATERAL FLOW TEST?

If your child or a member of your family returns a positive LFD test result, they should isolate immediately, notify the school and book a PCR test by calling 111 or visiting gov.im/covid19

If your child returns a positive LFD test, siblings and other members of your family can continue to attend school and the workplace, but you should remain vigilant for symptoms of COVID-19, and if the positive LFD test is confirmed by a PCR result, consider increased LFD testing for other members of the household.

WILL STUDENTS NEED TO SOCIALLY DISTANCE?

No, at the present time there will be no specific requirements for social distancing within schools and colleges. Our aim is to maintain social settings and access education as far as possible.

WILL STUDENTS NEED TO WEAR A FACE COVERING?

Wearing a face covering can help to protect both the wearer and those around them and are particularly effective when worn in confined or enclosed spaces and close contact settings.

All staff, and students at secondary schools and UCM are encouraged to wear face coverings in school buildings and on buses.

Primary school children do not need to wear a face covering, but might choose to if they wish.

WHAT IF A STUDENT IS UNWELL?

Attendance at school is compulsory, but if a student feels unwell or develops any COVID-19 symptoms, they should not attend school, and should stay at home. You should notify school as soon as possible and request a PCR test by going to gov.im/covid19 or calling 111.

If a primary student is unwell but does not have the symptoms of COVID-19, you should treat them as you would with another illness, keeping them at home if the illness is severe and notifying school, but it is still a good idea to monitor them to ensure that they do not begin displaying COVID-19 symptoms.

If a secondary or UCM student is unwell but does not have the symptoms of COVID-19, it is recommended that they take a LFD test for extra precaution for the duration of their sickness/absence.

WILL EXAMS GO AHEAD IN 2022?

Major exams such as GCSEs, A-levels and vocational qualifications are expected to return in 2022, however the situation remains under review.

WHAT IF I, OR MY CHILD, HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT COVID-19 IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS?

For questions regarding COVID-19, we encourage you to check the latest public health advice by visiting gov.im/covid19

If you have a concern about mitigations in place within the school or how they relate to your child, you are encouraged to contact the head teacher in the first instance.

MY CHILD IS ANXIOUS ABOUT COVID-19

It is understandable that some children may have picked up on wider anxieties about COVID-19. The return to school and a new school year should be a positive and exciting time with children happy and relaxed. If your child is anxious, check out our guide to talking to your child about COVID-19:

- Help children to feel in control – giving them specific things such as hand washing and wearing a face covering if they wish
- Explain the role that handwashing plays to help stop viruses from spreading to others
- Be a great role model and let your children see you washing your hands often and wearing a face covering
- Put news stories into context – that serious illness for children is rare and that there are lots of children who are well and healthy
- Talk about the positives – doctors have worked hard to help protect people using the vaccine, to keep us all safe and healthy
- Keep checking in with your children and let them know you are there to talk
- Further wellbeing help can be found at kooth.com and covid19.gov.im/health-wellbeing/are-you-ok/

