

To all GC students and parents/carers,

I am writing to update you on recent changes made to COVID-19 isolation rules following the emergence of the Omicron variant.

Close contacts will be identified by [NHS Test and Trace](#) and not the College. NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case to identify any close contacts. Contacts from the College will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact.

The main change is that 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 be contacted directly by NHS Test and Trace, be required to self-isolate immediately and book a [PCR test](#).

For everyone else, the isolation rules remain unchanged. Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone who has **not** been identified as having the **Omicron variant** of COVID-19 (or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19 that is not the Omicron variant) and if any of the following apply:

- they're fully vaccinated
- they're below the age of 18-years-6-months
- they've taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they're not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons.

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a [PCR test](#). (We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.)

18-year-olds will be treated in the same way as children until 6 months after their 18th birthday, to allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated. At which point, they will be subject to the same rules as adults and so if they choose not to get vaccinated, they will need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact.

The College will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams in the case of a significant local outbreak. If there is a significant outbreak in the College, a director of public health might advise us to temporarily reintroduce some additional control measures.

Many thanks and best wishes,

Simon