

COVID-19 Policy - September 2021

VLUK accepts our responsibilities during the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic to ensure we are protecting our learners and workforce and minimising the risk of spread of infection.

This policy is intended to introduce consistent measures in line with the Government's recommendations. We will comply with the latest Government advice on Coronavirus at all times.

We have updated our risk assessment to make the working environment as safe as it possibly can be to follow the Government's guidance on Coronavirus. A copy of this has been shared with all staff, and is also available on our website. We will communicate what is required to learners and parent/carers also. The risk assessment should be read in conjunction with this policy.

As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we learn to live with, there is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to young people's education - particularly given that the direct clinical risks to young people are extremely low, and every adult has been offered a first vaccine and the opportunity for two doses by mid-September.

ISOLATION

Any learners or staff who have symptoms of COVID 19, or receive a positive LFD test, must isolate and get a PCR test as soon as possible.

Learners and staff not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

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

Close contacts will be identified via NHS Test and Trace and VLUK will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing. NHS Test and Trace will contact learners or staff to let them know that they have been identified as a contact and check whether they are legally required to self-isolate. If they are not legally required to self-isolate, they will be provided with advice on testing and given guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19. Even if they do not have

symptoms, they will be advised to have a PCR test as soon as possible. If they are symptomatic they should stay at home.

Adults who do not need to isolate and young people aged under 18 years 6 months who usually attend an education setting, and who have been identified as a close contact, should continue to attend the setting as normal. They do not need to wear a face covering within the setting, but it is expected and recommended that these are worn when travelling on public or dedicated transport.

VLUK will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is an outbreak at a campus or if central government offers the area an enhanced response package, a director of public health might advise a setting to temporarily reintroduce some additional control measures.

Face coverings are no longer advised for learners, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas.

The government has removed the requirement to wear face coverings in law but expects and recommends they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where an individual may come into contact with people they do not normally meet (e/g receptions of leisure centres etc). This includes public transport.

When an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test

Learners, staff and other adults should follow public health advice on [when to self isolate](#). They should not come into the campus if they have [symptoms](#) or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, they are required to quarantine or have a positive test).

If a learner or member of staff develops COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, they will be sent home to follow public health advice.

For everyone with symptoms, they should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household.

If a learner is awaiting collection they should be left in a room on their own if possible and safe to do so. A window should be opened for fresh air ventilation if possible. Appropriate PPE should also be used if close contact is necessary. Any rooms they use should be cleaned after they have left.

The household (including any siblings) must follow PHE [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).

ONLINE LEARNING

For learners unable to attend campus for COVID-19 related reasons, for example, because they need to self-isolate, they will be able to access remote education to minimise disruption to their learning. They can log onto live lessons to continue their studies.

CONTROL MEASURES

These measures will be in place at all VLUK campuses.

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone.
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes.
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.
4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Hand hygiene

Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should now be regular practice. Learners should continue, and be encouraged to clean their hands regularly. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser.

Respiratory hygiene

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important.

Cleaning

An appropriate cleaning schedule will be in place, including regular cleaning of areas and equipment (for example twice per day), with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces.

Ventilation

It is important to ensure rooms are well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained.

Opening external windows can improve natural ventilation, and in addition, opening internal doors can also assist with creating a throughput of air. If necessary external opening doors may also be used (if they are not fire doors and where safe to do so).

We will aim to balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature.

Wider public transport

We encourage learners and staff to continue to walk, cycle or drive wherever it is possible and safe to do so. Where learners and staff use public transport, they should follow the [safer travel guidance for passengers](#).

Safe behaviour off site

Learners will be reminded about their conduct when entering and leaving the setting and to follow guidelines at all times when off site also.

Monitoring and review of risk controls

We will monitor and review these measures regularly, to ensure they are working, and taking action to address any shortfalls, and update documents as advice changes.

TESTING

Staff or learners who receive a positive LFD test result should self-isolate in line with the [stay-at-home guidance](#). They will also need to get a [free PCR test to check if they have COVID-19](#).

Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate.

If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive LFD test, and is negative, it overrides the LFD test result and the student can return to their setting, as long as the individual does not have COVID-19 symptoms.

Those with a negative LFD test result can continue to attend campus.

Learners will be encouraged to home test before returning to campuses in September, and home test twice a week throughout September in line with current Government guidelines.

Vaccine

We encourage learners to take up the offer of both doses of the vaccine, as soon as they become eligible.