

GUIDANCE NOTE TO ALL EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

The Department of Health published its [Test, Trace and Protect Transition Plan](#) on 24 March 2022. The changes outlined in the Department of Health's Transition Plan reflect a move into a phase where we learn to live with COVID while still seeking to protect the most vulnerable in society. It details a number of changes in relation to the management and response to COVID across society that will have an impact on educational settings.

The key changes in the Transition Plan that will impact the education sector are in the following areas:

- The withdrawal of the asymptomatic testing programme in mainstream schools, early years settings and childcare settings from the Easter break;
- The withdrawal of public PCR testing facilities for most people in the general population from 22 April; and
- The phasing out of routine population level contact tracing across society between 22 April and the end of June.

The Transition Plan states that the asymptomatic testing programme in special schools will continue after Easter and will be kept under review. It may continue until the end of June.

To reflect the Transition Plan and the wider societal move to learn to live alongside COVID, the DE COVID Guidance has been fundamentally revised. The revised guidance does not contain any significant changes in policy that have not previously been announced by the Minister for Education. It aims to be a shorter and more accessible document for educational settings that reflects the general direction of travel across society. In recognising that COVID is still within our communities and schools, it continues to seek to balance the current level of COVID risk with ensuring that children and young people can avail of a full educational experience.

The [revised DE COVID guidance](#) is now available on the Department's website.

DE COVID Management

6 April 2022