

Guidance on Use of the NHS COVID-19 App in Education and Childcare Settings

Please use the link below to guide you on the use of the NHS COVID-19 App. This guidance has very clear information regarding the use of the app within your setting:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-the-nhs-covid-19-app-in-schools-and-further-education-colleges/use-of-the-nhs-covid-19-app-in-schools-and-further-education-colleges>

The guidance helps to explain the **rare circumstances** where a notification received may not be accurate. It also explains how the app is intended for use by anyone **aged 16 and over**.

The Law

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) Regulations 2020, Regulation 2(1) specifically provides that the self-isolation requirement must be made by a duly authorised person and by a means other than the NHS smartphone app. For practical purposes an officer of NHS Test and Trace, an authorised NHS person, a person authorised by a Local Authority or Public Health England are the people who are able to issue a legally binding direction to self-isolate, contravention of which without legitimate reason (e.g. seeking urgent medical assistance) is a criminal offence.

The NHS Smartphone App

Everyone who uses the app should follow the notification to self-isolate, because this will reduce the spread of infection. 'Close contact' is based on an algorithm, but generally means you have been within 2 metres of someone for 15 minutes or more. Individuals are not informed who the positive case is. Notifications to self-isolate from the app should be adhered to, but they do not replace the need to identify close contacts of cases within your setting.

To prevent false notifications and minimise unnecessary operational impact, there are circumstances under which the contact tracing functionality of the app should be turned off:

- Where mobile phones are left in lockers or bags in communal areas
- Where students or staff members are wearing clinical-grade PPE
- Where a student or member of staff is separated from others by a full height Perspex screen

If you believe a false notification has occurred, then please document the circumstances, and contact your local Public Health Team for advice. Any decision to disregard an app notification should be made in consultation with senior leadership of the setting, and the local Public Health Team.

Local Approach

- Organisations should adopt a clear policy about when the app should and should not be turned on during the academic day.
- Organisations should have a plan for managing app notifications that occur in their setting.
- Organisations should communicate their policies regarding the use of the app to students, parents/carers and staff.
- Where a decision is made that an app notification was in error, the circumstances, and the decision to disregard the app notification should be documented. It is advisable to keep a record of this.