

COVID-19 guidance for staff

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Introduction

There are no longer restrictions on the approach to teaching and learning in higher education environments in England as a result of COVID-19. We continue to conduct risk assessments and implement sensible and effective measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission at Spirit Studios.

We all have a responsibility to follow the guidance outlined in this document to minimise the risk to health of all staff, students and visitors at Spirit Studios. It is now a legal duty to self-isolate if testing positive for COVID-19 or being told to self-isolate by NHS Track and Trace, with possible fines ranging from £1,000 to £10,000.

If multiple diagnoses of COVID-19 occur within the Spirit Studios community, such as a large-scale outbreak, restrictions may be implemented to control that outbreak. Such restrictions can include a reduction in face-to-face learning and facility access. It is in everyone's interest to follow this guidance to reduce the chances of such restrictions being implemented.

Please [notify](#) us if you have to self-isolate or receive a positive COVID-19 test result.

COVID-19 symptoms

The [NHS states the main COVID-19 symptoms](#) are:

- **a high temperature** - this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- **a new, continuous cough** - this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** - this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

However, research by [ZOE COVID Study](#) is suggesting that these symptoms currently rank down the list of possible COVID-19 symptoms. This is indicating that symptoms are changing with the evolving variants of the virus and those who are vaccinated are experiencing less severe symptoms. More cases are now being reported by younger people who have been found to experience different, less severe symptoms generally.

Please also monitor for the following symptoms:

- **Headache**
- **Runny nose**
- **Sneezing**
- **Sore Throat**

If you've been vaccinated and start sneezing a lot without an explanation, or have any of the above symptoms, you should self-isolate and get a COVID-19 test. If in doubt, take a test.

COVID-19 vaccination

We strongly encourage all staff to take up the offer of both doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, and any subsequent booster doses.

If you haven't already, please register with a local GP. Those who are registered with a GP will receive an invitation to be vaccinated. You can then book your appointment at a vaccination site, a community pharmacy, some GP run sites and some hospitals through the [national booking service](#) or by calling 119. Manchester occasionally has some 'pop up' vaccination clinics too, where you can receive a vaccination without an appointment. We'll communicate these to you as we hear about them.

Travel and transport

Please see the [safer travel guidance](#) for more information on walking, cycling and travelling in vehicles or on public transport during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Check-in to Spirit Studios with the NHS COVID-19 app

The NHS COVID-19 app allows staff, students and visitors to check-in to Spirit Studios by scanning a QR code, which enables NHS Test and Trace to send notifications. A QR code is located in reception.

To minimise transmission of COVID-19, it is vital that as many contacts as possible are identified and advised to take action in accordance with government guidelines.

We may be contacted by NHS Test and Trace to help with identifying close contacts.

Face coverings

The government has removed the requirement to wear face coverings in law but expects and recommends that they be worn in enclosed and crowded spaces, including where people may come into contact with people they don't normally meet.

We ask all staff to be in possession of a face covering should the need to use one arise. There may be instances where wearing a face covering feels right, or other individuals in the same room as you feel more comfortable wearing a face covering. We ask you to please be mindful of others in this regard.

Face coverings should fit securely around the face to cover the nose and mouth and be made with a breathable material capable of filtering airborne particles.

Spirit Studios keeps a small stock of disposable face coverings at reception, should any member of staff forget theirs. Do not dispose of any disposable masks in the general bins at Spirit Studios. If you use disposable masks, please safely dispose of them either via the designated bin behind reception or away from the Spirit Studios premises.

Meetings

Where at all possible, try to minimise unnecessary face-to-face contact with others. Consider using video conferencing tools instead (Google Meet or Zoom). Where face-to-face meetings do take place, try keeping two metres apart, consider wearing face coverings and open any windows. Keep any face-to-face meetings as brief as possible.

Hand washing

One of the most effective ways in reducing the spread of COVID-19 is regular and thorough washing of hands. Please wash your hands immediately upon arrival at Spirit Studios, prior to entering any rooms and prior to signing out equipment. Hand sanitiser dispensers are located in reception and around the building. Signs are located in each toilet and hand sanitizing station showing the recommended approach to washing hands thoroughly.

Try to stop touching your face with your hands.

Always carry tissues and use them to catch a cough or sneeze. Dispose of your tissue and then wash your hands as quickly as possible. Remember: Catch it, bin it, kill it.

Self-cleaning of frequently touched surfaces

Cleaning materials for your own use are available in rooms and from reception should you wish to clean surfaces, such as computer keyboards and mice, console armrests and chair armrests.

Technical support

Face-to-face technical support is available. You may be asked to wear a face covering, or leave the room, whilst support is being provided.

Regular testing

You should test twice each week (3 to 4 days apart) using home lateral flow device (LFD) test kits. You can order free packs of LFD test kits from this [website](#).

It is really important that, when testing at home, test results are [reported online to NHS Test and Trace](#) whether positive, negative or void. Reporting results helps the NHS monitor the spread of the virus, combat the virus and save lives.

If you have had a confirmed positive PCR test for COVID-19 in the last 90 days, you do not need to be tested again within this time period if you are asymptomatic. You are still required to follow the national guidance for adults who have been identified as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case:

[Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed COVID-19 who do not live with the person](#)

[Guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#)

If you have a medical or other reason that prevents you from engaging in LFD testing, please contact us.

Inviting visitors to Spirit Studios

Prior to any visitors attending on-site, please email them a link to our [COVID-19 guidance for visitors](#).

What do I do if I'm clinically extremely vulnerable?

The shielding programme has now come to an end and adults previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) should, as a minimum, continue to follow the same guidance as everyone else. It is important that everyone adheres to this guidance but people previously considered CEV may wish to consider taking extra precautions. Use the [guidance for people previously considered CEV](#).

In some circumstances, you may have received personal advice from a specialist or clinician on additional precautions to take and you should continue to follow that advice.

What do I do if a student or visitor tells me they feel ill with COVID-19 symptoms?

1. Tell them to go home and begin self-isolating, following the national [guidance for people with a possible or confirmed positive COVID-19 test result](#).
2. Arrange a PCR test. They can [book this online](#) or by calling 119.
3. Tell them to complete our [COVID-19 self-isolation form](#) to inform us that they are self-isolating.

This information is available in the [COVID-19 guidance for students](#).

When do I need to self-isolate?

Self-isolate straight away if:

- You have COVID-19 symptoms (a high temperature, a new continuous cough, a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)
- You've tested positive for COVID-19
- Someone you live with has symptoms or has tested positive (unless you are not required to self-isolate - check below if this applies to you)
- You've been told to self-isolate following contact with someone who tested positive - [find out what to do if you're told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app](#)

What do I do if someone I live with has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19, or if I'm a contact of someone with COVID-19?

If someone you live with has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19, or if you are a contact of someone with COVID-19, you will not need to self-isolate if any of the following apply:

- You're fully vaccinated - this means 14 days have passed since your final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine given by the NHS
- You're under 18 years, 6 months old
- You're taking part or have taken part in a COVID-19 vaccine trial

- You're not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

However, you should still:

1. Contact your line manager to inform them that someone you live with has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19, or if you are a contact of someone with COVID-19.
2. [Arrange a PCR test](#) (or by calling 119) that day, if possible, or the following day to check if you have COVID-19. Please try to arrange an appointment for a PCR test, rather than receive a test through the post as you will receive the results much quicker (usually within 24 hours).
3. undertake LFD testing each morning for the remaining duration of your contact's self-isolation period. You can order them for free from this [website](#).
4. Take further precautions at Spirit Studios for the remaining duration of your close contact's self-isolation period, such as increased use of face coverings and distancing yourself from other individuals.
5. Follow advice on [how to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19](#)
6. Consider limiting contact with [people who are at higher risk from COVID-19](#)
7. If the result is positive, please see the 'What do I do if I test positive for COVID-19' section.

Otherwise, you must self-isolate.

What do I do if I have symptoms or are self-isolating?

1. Contact your line manager to inform them that you have symptoms or have started self-isolating.
1. Complete our [COVID-19 self-isolation form](#) to inform COVID Support that you are self-isolating.
2. [Arrange a PCR test](#) (or by calling 119) that day, if possible, or the following day to check if you have COVID-19. Please try to arrange an appointment for a PCR test, rather than receive a test through the post as you will receive the results much quicker (usually within 24 hours).
3. Stay at home while you are waiting for your PCR test result and follow (along with other members of your household) the national [guidance for people with a possible or confirmed positive COVID-19 test result](#).
4. If you are feeling well enough, and are able to, you can work from home until you receive your PCR test result.
5. When you receive your test result, and if you develop symptoms whilst you are self-isolating, please complete the [COVID-19 self-isolation form](#) again. Also inform your line manager of any changes.

What do I do if I test positive for COVID-19?

1. Contact your line manager to inform them of the positive COVID-19 test result.
2. Complete our [COVID-19 self-isolation form](#) to inform COVID support that you are self-isolating.
3. If the test result came from an LFD test, [arrange a PCR test](#) (or by calling 119) that day, if possible, or the following day to check if you have COVID-19. Please try to arrange an appointment for a PCR test, rather than receive a test through the post as you will receive the results much quicker (usually within 24 hours).
4. Stay at home while you are waiting for your PCR test result and follow the national [guidance for people with a possible or confirmed positive COVID-19 test result](#).

5. If you receive a positive PCR result, you must self-isolate.
6. Complete our [COVID-19 self-isolation form](#) again to inform COVID support of the positive PCR test result. Provide the names of anyone who is a contact at Spirit Studios. A contact, in terms of the transmission of COVID-19, is defined in section 22 of this guidance.
7. Contact your line manager to inform us of the positive COVID-19 PCR test result.
8. Your line manager will offer you support, keep in contact with you throughout your self-isolation and ensure you have the necessary resources to continue working from home, if possible and if you're well enough to do so.
9. Tell contacts outside of Spirit Studios that you have COVID-19 and to follow the latest government guidance.

What do I do if I test negative via a PCR test for COVID-19?

1. Contact your line manager to inform them of the negative COVID-19 test result
2. Inform COVID support of the negative result by completing our [COVID-19 self-isolation form](#)
3. We will confirm that you can return to Spirit Studios as normal.

How do I self-isolate?

You must not leave your home if you're self isolating:

- Do not go to Spirit Studios, or any other places of work
- Do not go on public transport or use taxis
- Do not go out to get food and medicine - order it online or by phone, or ask someone to bring it to your home
- Do not have visitors in your home, including friends and family - except for people providing essential care
- Do not go out to exercise - exercise at home or in your garden, if you have one.

Your self-isolation period includes the day or symptoms started (or the day you had the test, if you did not have symptoms) and the next 10 full days. You may need to self-isolate for longer if you get symptoms while self-isolating or your symptoms do not go away. Read more about [how long to self-isolate](#).

What is a contact?

A contact is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. A person can be a contact any time from 2 days before you developed symptoms (or, if you did not have any symptoms, from 2 days before the date your positive test was taken), and up to 10 days after, as this is when you can pass the infection on to others. This includes:

- Face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within one metre of you
- They have been within one metre of you for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- They have been within two metres of you for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day)

You will be asked to provide a list of contacts from Spirit Studios to us if you test positive for COVID-19. You should also contact any contacts you've had outside Spirit Studios to inform them that you've tested positive for COVID-19.

What we do when you inform us that you're self-isolating or have received a positive COVID-19 result

When we receive notification of a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19, we follow a detailed process that includes tracking and tracing to reduce transmission, communication to the relevant staff, students and visitors and cleaning of any affected areas where appropriate.

Staff who are confirmed as having COVID-19 are asked to share details of their identified contacts at Spirit Studios to allow us to inform those that will need to self-isolate in line with government guidelines. In addition to this, we are using timetabling and facilities booking data to identify staff, students and visitors who may have been in close proximity to a confirmed COVID-19 case and may therefore have to isolate.

Supporting staff who need to self-isolate

We understand how difficult it is for those who need to self-isolate due to COVID-19. Your line manager will be able to offer you support. We're also offering welfare check-ins for all staff who are self isolating.

Working from home - While self-isolating, you should continue to work from home, if possible, if you are well enough to do so. Stay in touch with your line manager. They can arrange for resources to be dropped off at your home if required.

Food deliveries - Many supermarkets have dramatically increased provision for home deliveries. You could also ask a friend or family member to deliver a grocery shop to your front door. [NHS Volunteer Responders](#) are also available.

Laundry - There are a number of 'click and collect' laundry facilities in Manchester.

Medicines - Many pharmacies now provide delivery options. You could also ask a friend or family member to collect medicines for you. [NHS Volunteer Responders](#) are also available.

Mental Health - If you're currently isolating and experiencing mental health difficulties, please contact us ASAP. Contact our welfare department, your line manager, any senior manager, or anyone you feel comfortable talking to.

Other - Contact us via covidsupport@spiritstudios.ac.uk if you require any other help or support

[NHS Volunteer Responders](#) can help with things like collecting shopping, collecting medicines and prescriptions and phone calls if you want to chat to someone. Call 0808 196 3646 (8am to 8pm, everyday) to arrange help from a volunteer.

If you are required to self-isolate, you may be eligible for a one-off payment of £500 through the [NHS Test and Trace Support Payment scheme](#)

Accommodation

You may be sharing accommodation with friends, family and other individuals. It is important that any shared areas within accommodation, such as kitchens and bathrooms, are cleaned regularly to minimise the risk of transmission. This is especially important if someone within the household/accommodation has tested positive or is displaying COVID-19 symptoms. Where households follow good practice to minimise transmission at all times, the overall risk of transmission will be reduced. Keep shared areas well ventilated, frequent hand washing with soap and water, limiting sharing surfaces or objects where possible and frequently cleaning shared surfaces and objects.

More information can be found in the [guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#).

Educational visits and field trips

There are no legal restrictions on educational visits and field trips within the UK, however a venue may have their own policies that we would be expected to abide by.

What we're doing to keep you safe at Spirit Studios

Please see our [COVID-19 control measures](#) document to see the measures we've implemented to reduce the risk of COVID-19 at Spirit Studios.

Appendix 1. Additional guidance for tutors

In addition to the main guidance, we have further guidance specifically for tutors:

- Be observant of any students displaying COVID-19 symptoms. Tell them to go home and self-isolate, only leaving home to get a COVID-19 PCR test, and complete our [COVID-19 self-isolation form](#).
- Where appropriate, prop open internal doors of rooms to assist with creating a throughput of air. External windows may also be opened, where available. Please ensure any doors and windows are closed at the end of your session in that room.
- Try to refrain from touching the keyboard and mouse of a student workstation. Instead, instruct the student to perform any actions.

Appendix 2. Additional guidance for technical support staff

In addition to the main guidance, we have further guidance specifically for technical support staff:

- When someone requests technical support via reception, see if technical support can be provided verbally at that point from behind the transparent screens, rather than entering the facility they are using
- As above, all technical staff will wash their hands prior to entering a facility. Be vigilant in not touching your face after touching any surfaces within the facility and wash your hands immediately on exit
- Technical staff can ask the individual(s) to leave a facility prior to providing support, if they wish.
- Technical support can be provided via Google Meet or Zoom if technical staff wish.