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NHS Test and Trace app – Use in Schools

A small number of schools have told staff to turn the NHS app for the duration of the time that they are in schools. This is unsafe and wrong. Department for Education guidance is clear: pausing contact tracing in schools is only recommended in three situations:

- when staff can't have their phone with them, for example because it is stored in a locker– this is to avoid the app picking up contacts when the individual is not with their phone
- when an individual is working behind a screen, fully protected from all other colleagues and members of the public, as the individual is considered to be adequately protected from contracting coronavirus.
- in a health or care setting where staff are wearing medical grade PPE.

Where mobile phones are allowed to be on and with the staff or student at all times, it is recommended that contact tracing is left on, to be consistent with general guidance on the use of the app. There are still likely to be times when students and staff are not near their phones, such as during physical education. In these situations, contact tracing should be switched off, and settings might want to issue reminders to pause contact tracing for these sessions and turn it back on afterwards.

Where mobile phones are required to be left in lockers or bags in communal areas at all times. It is recommended that settings advise or require students to pause contact tracing whilst on the premises under these circumstances, to avoid the app misidentifying close contacts. When someone switches it off, the app will give the user the option to set a reminder for 4, 8 or 12 hours, after which they will receive a notification to remind them to switch contact tracing back.

If these procedures are followed and staff or pupils receive an alert telling them they have spent time near someone who has tested positive for coronavirus they must stay at home and self-isolate, as instructed by the app.

Visit **faq.covid19.nhs.uk/** for more details of what you should do in these circumstances.