07/12/2021

Dear Parents and carers,

Thank you for continuing to keep our school as safe as possible by testing your child twice weekly using the free lateral flow tests, and ordering precautionary PCR tests if your child

- has been in contact with a positive case
- is too unwell to come to school and has symptoms that are new, unusual or persistent (see list below)

In common with other schools, some students have tested positive for Covid-19 and are isolating as a result. The numbers are small (single figures), but, because we are a special school, we have been advised to write to you so that you have some standard information in one place. We are having further discussions with Public Health England and will let you know of any additional measures that we will be putting in place between now and the end of term.

We know that you may find this concerning, but we are continuing to monitor the situation and will provide you with further advice. Please be reassured that for most people, especially children and young people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

School will remain open as usual and your child should continue to attend as normal if they remain well. We encourage household members that are aged 11 and over to continue with twice weekly LFD testing to help identify cases promptly.

New, persistent, or unusual symptoms

If your child is too unwell to be at school and has any wider symptoms which are ***new, persistent, or unusual*** they should stay at home and take a PCR test to rule out Covid-19. These symptoms include:

- shortness of breath or wheezing
- fatigue
- loss of appetite
- muscle ache or pain
- sore throat and/or hoarseness
- persistent headache
- runny or blocked nose
- nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea

They should also book a PCR test if they've been in contact with someone who's tested positive, though can attend school while waiting for the result unless they are unwell.

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Our vision: Achievement for all in a unique world class school

What to do if your child develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or tests positive for COVID-19

If your child develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), they should get a PCR test and remain at home at least until the result is known. If negative, the child can end self-isolation; if positive, the child should isolate until at least 10 days after their symptoms appeared. Symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are a new, continuous cough, or a high temperature, or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia). If the child has a positive test result but does not have symptoms, they should stay at home and self-isolate for 10 days from the date the positive test was taken. This isolation period will be extended if they go on to develop symptoms by counting 10 full days from the day following their symptom onset. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for a PCR test (the normally available test type) and this can be arranged via Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus (COVID-19) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) or by calling 119.

What is the latest advice for the contacts of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

If someone is identified as a contact of a person who has had a positive test result for COVID-19, then they must stay at home and self-isolate unless they meet one of the following conditions:

- Are fully vaccinated[1]
- Are below the age of 18 years 6 months
- Have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- Are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

However, if they live with or are contact of someone who has been identified as a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, then the above conditions do not apply, and they must stay at home and self-isolate (even if they are fully vaccinated or under the age of 18 years and 6 months). For more information on this, please see the latest guidance (links below)

Guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection

Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection who do not live with the person - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Any member of the household who is aged 18 years and 6 months or over and has only received one dose of COVID-19 vaccine or has not received any dose of the COVID-19 vaccination will still be required to self-isolate as household contact of a someone with COVID-19 symptoms awaiting testing and someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

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[1] Fully vaccinated means that you have been vaccinated with an MHRA approved COVID-19 vaccine in the UK, and at least 14 days have passed since you received the recommended doses of that vaccine.

NHS Test and Trace will get in touch with anyone who is a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 to check whether they are legally required to self-isolate. If they are not legally required to self-isolate, then 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.

You may be entitled to a one-off payment of £500 through the NHS Test and Trace Support Payment scheme if you are required to stay at home and self-isolate or you are the parent or guardian of a child who has been told to self-isolate.

Those who are clinically extremely vulnerable should be supported to minimise their contact with other people in the household during this period, regardless of whether others have symptoms or not.

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness. If your child does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from the nhs.uk website at https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/. If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, or they are worsening you can seek advice from NHS 111 at https://111.nhs.uk/ or by phoning 111.

How to stop coronavirus (COVID-19) spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with coronavirus (COVID-19):

- get vaccinated – everyone aged 12 and over can book COVID-19 vaccination appointments
- wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- meet people outside and avoid crowded areas
- open doors and windows to let in fresh air if meeting people inside
- wear a face covering if aged 11 and over when it's hard to stay away from other people – particularly indoors or in crowded places
- participate in twice weekly LFD testing following national guidelines (recommended for 11 years and over). We encourage you to log your results here: https://www.gov.uk/log-test-site-covid19-results

Further Information

Further information is available at https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

Yours sincerely,

Mr Kevin McDonnell
Headteacher