



Lateral Flow tests for primary school staff

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you may be aware the government, in conjunction with the NHS, are instigating a programme of Lateral Flow Testing for primary school staff which we started on Monday 25th January 2021.

The aim of the testing is to identify asymptomatic carriers of the virus in order to break the chains of transmission. While the testing is for staff only – not children – and therefore any organisation and implications for the actual testing is for us alone, the implications of identifying positive cases impacts on all.

We have been very fortunate as a school to not have had any positive cases leading to bubble closures so far but this does not mean we have not, nor will not, have staff who are asymptomatic carrying the virus.

School staff are now undertaking the Lateral Flow tests twice a week.

These tests are undertaken at home. If a test identifies that a member of staff is positive, then they will need to self-isolate immediately and inform me of the result (headteacher). The school will then follow the test and trace protocol we have had in place since September, which follows NHS, DFE and LA guidelines.

If a bubble needs to be closed, the closure will come into effect immediately. Parents will be informed by email/text. The member of staff will then book a PCR test for conformation. In the unlikely event that the PCR test returns a negative result the bubble will be reopened and parents informed of this with timing details.

This morning we have had to close a bubble due to a positive lateral flow test, the member of staff will now have a PCR test for conformation. If it returns a

negative result the bubble will re-open and we will inform parents of this with timing details.

We know that you may find this concerning but we are continuing to monitor the situation and are working closely with Public Health England. This letter is to inform you of the current situation and provide advice on how to support your child. Please be reassured that for most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

The small number of children who have been in close contact with the individual who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) have received a letter informing them that their child must stay at home for 10 days.

The school remains open and your child should continue to attend as normal if they remain well.

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must not come to school and should remain at home for at least **10 days** from the date when their symptoms appeared. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for a PCR test (the normally available test type) and this can be arranged via <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.

All other household members who remain well, must stay at home and not leave the house for 10 days. This includes anyone in your 'Support Bubble'.

Further information is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

The household isolation period includes the day the first person in your household's symptoms started (or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms) and the next 10 full days. This means that if, for example, your 10 day isolation period starts on the 15th of the month, your isolation period ends at 23:59 hrs on the 25th and you can return to your normal routine.

Household members should not go to work, school or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home.

If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you should ask friends or family. Alternatively, you can order your shopping online and medication by phone or online.

Household members staying at home for 10 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community

If you are able, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period.

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

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 COVID-19 spreading

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

Do

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- 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

Further Information

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

Yours sincerely

Mrs Donna Lee

Headteacher