



Thursday 10th September 2020

COVID TESTING AND ISOLATION

Dear Parents and Carers,

With the amount of minor illnesses that always go along with a new school year, I thought it would be helpful to make sure everyone was up to date in terms of how to respond to any symptom associated with Covid-19, even where it might be as a result of a general cold or other illness.

The following information is an amalgamation of guidance directly from the government, which you can find here: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>; the NHS, which can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/what-your-test-result-means/> and also information school has received from other professionals.

The reason for the triangulation of various sources is that there are some discrepancies in the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) guidance and the NHS guidance in terms of what happens following a negative test result. I have based the information below on the NHS guidance as it is much clearer and seems to be up-to-date.

SYMPTOMS: Although Covid-19 can present with a number of symptoms, the ones that trigger a need to self-isolate and get a test are as follows:

- a high temperature (note that there is no longer a specific temperature given to define 'high');
- a new, continuous cough;
- a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste.

Exhaustion and respiratory difficulties are also key factors that have been identified in people suffering coronavirus.

In younger children diarrhoea and stomach cramps have also been reported.

SELF-ISOLATION: If you have symptoms of COVID-19, however mild, you must self-isolate until you have either received a negative test result (subject to conditions) or the time periods below are completed:

- 10 days from the onset of symptoms and 14 days for anyone else in your household and support bubble;

If, during the 14 day isolation period for the household, someone else displays symptoms, they must isolate for 10 days from that point, even if that goes beyond the original 14 days.

TESTING: The only way to potentially not have to self-isolate for 10 or 14 days is to be tested and for everyone else in the household/support bubble **who has displayed symptoms** to be tested. The NHS website is very clear about this:

- “If you had a test because you had symptoms, you and anyone you live with must stay at home (self-isolate) until you get your result. Anyone in your support bubble must also self-isolate until you get your result”

If you, or anyone else in the house receives a positive test result, you must then continue the isolation periods above, even if someone else in the household has a negative test. If, however, there is a negative result you can stop self-isolation, as long as (all four must apply):

- Everyone you live with **who has symptoms** tests negative;
- Everyone in your support bubble **who has symptoms** tests negative;
- You were not told to self-isolate for 14 days by NHS Test and Trace;
- You feel well – if you feel unwell, stay at home until you’re feeling better.

If you receive an “unclear, void, borderline or inconclusive test result”, you must continue self-isolation and book another test.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL: If a child at school is off because of one of the symptoms listed above, even where that symptom may appear to be a result of something else, your child will need to be tested before returning to school, or will need to self-isolate for the listed time-periods. If school has clear evidence of another member of the household having symptoms (such as a sibling at another school) then we will also expect the child to be off until appropriate tests have taken place or the self-isolation period is up.

GETTING A TEST: This bit should be relatively easy, but we know that the testing system has been struggling at the moment (quite possibly because of everything listed above!). The link to book a test is here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

It is currently clear that you may need to try again in a few hours due to how busy they are in some areas.

WHAT IF OTHER CHILDREN OR ADULTS DISPLAY OTHER ILLNESSES/SYMPTOMS?

The usual suspects for this time of year will be in existence such as flu, sore throats and so on. In order for our staffing to remain as high as possible we must mitigate risk by ensuring ill children or staff don't attend school. The guidance on vomiting, diarrhoea and such like, remains the same - return to school after 48 hours from the last bout. In the event of a temperature the advice from Public Health England is for the person concerned to remain at home until the fever has gone. The use of paracetamol/calpol may mask this symptom and so the fever must have gone before returning to school.

Yours sincerely



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Headteacher