



Acting Head of School : Mrs F Cessford
Acting Executive Headteacher : Mrs F Craik

5th November 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

There has been a large increase in the number of children and young people in County Durham testing positive for COVID-19 and the highest case rates are in school age children. This is leading to spread of COVID-19 within families and into older age groups.

The increase in COVID-19 cases in children is disrupting their education, affecting schools and has an impact on the wider community.

We have received **recommendations** from Durham County Council's Public Health team and have decided to re-introduce the following measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in school:

- The **recommended** use of face coverings in classrooms and communal areas for secondary age pupils
- The continued staggering of break and lunch times
- The use of face coverings in communal areas for all adults
- Grouping of pupils in school by class or year group to reduce mixing where possible
- To cancel or postpone educational visits and residential trips
- Open days or events to move to a virtual format
- To move assemblies to a virtual format
- PCR testing for all adults and pupils if they are a close contact of a positive case in their household*.
- Daily LFT testing at home for 7 days for any adult or secondary age pupil who is a household contact of a positive case and is exempt from isolation and continues to attend school. Testing should start from the day the household member has symptoms or if they don't have symptoms from when they tested positive*
- Additional attention will be given to ventilation, cleaning and respiratory and hand hygiene

**Note: People who have tested positive with a PCR test within the last 90 days should not be encouraged to test unless they develop new symptoms*

Please be reassured that for most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

LFD Testing advice

We would recommend that your child completes an LFD test twice weekly, ideally 3-4 days apart. If you require LFD testing in addition to those which your child brings home from school you can order home testing kits to be delivered to your home here www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests



Or you can collect LFD kits at Community Collect sites across the County. To find your nearest collection point please enter your post code here maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk

If you pick up tests from a pharmacy, you may be asked for a 'collect code' this helps the NHS match your details to the tests. To get a 'collect code' please visit test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/collect-lateral-flow-kits

Please register the result of your home test at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result

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

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

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

If your child does develop symptoms, they should get a PCR test and remain at home at least until the result is known. Book a free PCR test at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test . If positive, your child should isolate for 10 full days after their symptoms appeared.

If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, you can seek advice from NHS 111 at 111.nhs.uk or by phoning 111.

If your 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.

Help, support, and further information.

To help you comply with the requirement to self-isolate, the County Durham Together Community Hub can provide access to essential supplies, financial support and emotional support as well as other services. Please visit www.durham.gov.uk/covid19help or call the Community Hub on 03000 260260 for further details.

There is also support available the coronavirus section via durhamlocate.org.uk

Finally, we would like to thank you for everything you've done to keep your family and community safe, and for your patience in continuing to support our school during this challenging time.

Yours faithfully
Mrs F Cessford