



14th December 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: Updated guidance regarding Covid 19 symptoms and what to do

For the rest of this term we will look to keep the school population updated about Covid cases/ measures we are taking on a weekly basis. I am doing this for the sake of transparency and to help families make informed decisions about what action to take at home. The judgement calls we are all having to make are becoming more nuanced, both in terms of judging symptoms and what to do when.

Please be mindful of the balance that needs to be struck here. There is plenty of evidence now of the impact on young people's mental health of this pandemic. I would urge all adults to be 'vigilant but sensible' about how they talk about the virus and the decisions they make.

Present number of Covid cases in school (adults + children) : **7**

Present extra control measures:

- Assemblies back to being Key Stage only
- Class assemblies as videos
- Wearing of masks by staff in the building
- No work experience

Guidance re what to do

Omicron Variant – Guidance

Pupils who have been identified as a close contact of a suspected / confirmed case of the Omicron Variant, irrespective of vaccination status and age, will be contacted directly and will be required to self-isolate immediately and asked to book a PCR. Pupils are not expected to isolate if in the same household as someone with COVID-19 who is **not** a suspect / confirmed case of the Omicron Variant. If they do come into contact with the Omicron Variant – they will need to isolate, if a household is in contact with the new variant, the whole household will need to isolate.

If children display any or all of these symptoms they should isolate and get a PCR test:

- New continuous cough (this means coughing a lot for more than 1 hour or 3 or more coughing episodes over 24 hours).
- Temperature
- Changes to taste and smell (cannot smell or taste anything or things taste different to normal).
Symptoms do not include runny nose, intermittent coughing associated with having a cold (clearly this is a grey area so please use your judgement).
Parents and settings should not try and 'second guess' diagnosis [e.g. "a cough due to hayfever"] –if child has the key symptoms, they should isolate and test.

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Please be reminded that if your child/ren display COVID-19 symptoms they will need to go for a PCR test instead of taking a lateral flow test as once the child has symptoms the lateral flow test becomes ineffective. In summary – lateral flows are for regular testing and NOT to be used if a child is displaying symptoms - once someone develops symptoms they must get a PCR. They must also get a PCR if one of the regular lateral flow tests comes back positive.

If child tests positive on PCR, they will need to isolate for 10 days from the point at which symptoms began.

If child with a fever tests negative for COVID-19 on LFD and/or PCR, they still need to remain at home and only return when they have been fever free for 24 hours and/or feel better.

If a child/adult tests positive on a LFD they must isolate and get a PCR – if the PCR test comes back negative, children **can** return to school as soon as they feel well. All close contacts of confirmed cases are advised to take a PCR test. If close contacts are under 18 years 6 months, double jabbed or cannot get vaccinated for medical reasons, they do not need to isolate.

If someone has recently (within 90 days) had a positive PCR test for COVID-19, they are likely to have developed some immunity. Individuals are exempt from testing both by PCR and LFD within 90 days of a positive PCR test, unless they develop new symptoms, in which case they should isolate and arrange for a PCR test.

If another child in the class tests positive, we will inform you. Your child does not need to isolate but we ask that you stay extra vigilant about possible symptoms above and get your child to take lateral flow tests regularly. You may however be contacted by Track and Trace and also asked to get your child a PCR. We are now taking the decision to contact you if someone in your child's class tests positive. We may receive further guidance about this soon. That said all parents should remain vigilant regarding symptoms.

If there is a spike in classroom cases, we would advise that children from that class take a lateral flow test daily. If they display symptoms, please take them straight for a PCR test instead of relying on a lateral flow.

If another family member tests positive, your child does not need to isolate but again we ask that you stay extra vigilant about possible symptoms above and get your child to take lateral flow tests daily. You may however be contacted by Track and Trace and also asked to get your child a PCR. Please note the updated guidance re positive LFD / negative PCR above.

Communication:

Please communicate with us immediately if you have any concerns at all about symptoms and if your child has a positive test result- LFD or PCR.

We will let you know immediately a child in class has tested positive- LFD or PCR.

We will also now be letting you know if a child in your child's class has suspected symptoms.

We will communicate with you on a weekly basis about latest guidance/ situation.

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All of the above is in line with our existing risk assessment and guidance from up on high-please see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/coronavirus-in-children/>. We will update you immediately guidance changes.

Kind regards,

Mr Moss

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