

4 November 2021

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS REGARDING ADDITIONAL MEASURES IN SCHOOL IN RESPONSE TO A RISE IN COVID CASES

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 use of face coverings in communal areas for all adults
- Parents are to remain behind the line at the start and end of the school day
- No communication with staff on the playground, please contact the office or use Marvellous Me/email if you need to speak to your child's class teacher.
- Grouping of pupils in school by class or year group to reduce mixing
- Open days or events to move to a virtual format
- To cancel or postpone whole school events e.g., assemblies
- 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 pupil in key stage 2 (year 3) or above who is a household contact of a positive case and is exempt from isolation and continues to attend school. The testing of primary age pupils is at parental discretion. 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 you have a supply of LFD testing kits at home in the event you are requested to use them. 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 full 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.

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

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.