



Covid symptoms, testing and Infection Control Information

14.9.2020

Dear parents/carers,

Thank you for informing the office when your child is ill/going to be off school-we really appreciate this. We know we are moving into the season for colds now and recognise it is difficult to decide whether your child has symptoms of a typical cold or Covid-19. We know the choice to send your child into school or not is difficult because you care about your child and because you want our school community to stay well-thank you for this. To help you please find the present information from the the NHS below:

If you have any of the main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), get a test as soon as possible. Stay at home until you get the result.

Main symptoms

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Most people with coronavirus have at least 1 of these symptoms.

What to do if you have symptoms

If you have any of the main symptoms of coronavirus:

1. Get a test to check if you have coronavirus as soon as possible.
2. Stay at home and do not have visitors until you get your test result – only leave your home to have a test.

Anyone you live with, and anyone in your support bubble, must also stay at home until you get your result.

We know from national news that accessing testing is varied over the country at present which is clearly unhelpful. I have heard from other local head teachers that some of their families have been able to access testing with ease and others have found this difficult/had to travel longer distances. We have been told many centres are open for testing and this method is quicker if you can book a slot. Previously you could drop in at Fixed Testing Centres such as Hempsted, Gloucester, but I have heard anecdotally that this is no longer possible due to current high demand and tests need to be booked in advance. You can order a home test kit as an alternative to going to a test centre. Here is the link that will help you in obtaining a test for a child/family member:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

Here is the link explaining the location of local mobile testing centres:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/covid-19-information-and-advice/mobile-testing-unit-locations/>

As part of our preparations we became familiar with the updated guidance for potential and confirmed cases of covid-19 within school and shared this with you at the start of term so we were ready to act together if/when needed. It seems sensible to share this information with you again, so you are aware of the present advice. The guidance can seem complicated as there are many possible scenarios and I am sorry for this. However, I enclose it in full to help. The links within the information should support you in reading further up-to date information too.

We know the situation is difficult and thank you for the amazing care you are showing for the children and families in our school.

With kind regards,

Zoe Avastu

Headteacher

Information on responding to infection in school

Engage with NHS Test and Trace process

Parents and staff will need to be ready and willing to:

- [book a test](#) if they or their child are displaying symptoms. Staff, and pupils must not come into the school if they have symptoms and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them in school. All children can be tested, including children under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parents/carers if using a home testing kit
- provide details of anyone they or their child have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- [self-isolate](#) if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), or if anyone in their household develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the NHS [testing and tracing for coronavirus](#) website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet.

We ask ask parents and staff to inform the school immediately of the results of a test and follow this guidance.

1. If someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.
2. If someone tests positive, they should follow the [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#) and must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days

Managing a confirmed case in the school community

When we become aware that someone who has attended school has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) we will contact the local health protection team.

The health protection team will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate.

The health protection team will work our school to guide us through the actions we need to take. Based on the advice from the health protection team, schools must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. Close contact means:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

The health protection team will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home. To support them in doing so, we will keep a register of pupils and staff in each class group as we do usually. A letter will be provided to school from the health protection team to send to parents and staff if needed. We will not share the names or details of people with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a class or group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period they should follow [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). They should get a test, and:

- if the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period. This is because they could still develop the coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days.
- if the test result is positive, they should inform their setting immediately, and should isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 14-day isolation period). Their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)

We will not request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

Further guidance is available on [testing and tracing for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Containing any outbreak-local health protection team advice

If we have two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, they may have an outbreak and we will work with our local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other pupils self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole site.

In consultation with the local Director of Public Health, where an outbreak in a school is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will first focus on the person's class, then the whole school if necessary, in line with routine public health outbreak control practice.