

05.11.2021

Dear Parents / Carers

Yesterday all schools in County Durham received updated COVID advice from Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health sharing the following information:

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.

Schools then received a list of possible recommendations from Durham County Council's Public Health team which they could introduce. It was made clear that these were not compulsory, and that schools were best placed to know what may work in their individual settings.

Currently in school we have a very small number of positive cases which are linked to contacts outside of school over half term. We have had no further positive cases this week. Whilst we do not want to put anyone at any additional risk, we feel that the children's mental health and well being needs to be carefully considered alongside the opportunity to access as wide a curriculum as possible before adopting any additional recommendations.

We have therefore decided to introduced a staged approach to the Public Health Team's recommendations with daily reviews taking place to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in school:

Stage 1

- The use of face coverings in communal areas for all adults
- Open days or events to move to a virtual format e.g. Parents Evening
- 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. (*CO2 monitors available in classrooms to monitor ventilation*).
- Breakfast club - children in bubbles.
- Staggered finish time

Stage 2

- Grouping of pupils in school by phase: EYFS, KS1, Y3&4, Y5&6 to reduce mixing

Stage 3

- Grouping of pupils in school by class
- To cancel or postpone educational visits and residential trips

*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.

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From Monday 8th November, we will operate in Stage 1

School start

This will continue as normal. We ask that parents do not gather around the quad gate area. **We will not be operating a one way system at the start of the school day.**

End of the school day

We are asking that parents come onto the site **at the end of the school day via the Beverley Garden gate** and collect their child from the main yard. **ALL CHILDREN** will leave the site via the **EYFS doors** with the exception of Y6 who will leave via their classroom door onto the main yard.

This will enable a clear **exit from the school grounds for all via York Terrace**. We ask that parents come onto the school yard at their allotted time and not before. Please see the table below for times:

Year group	Time
EYFS	2:55pm
Y1 and Y2	3:05pm
Y3 and Y4	3:15pm
Y5 and Y6	3:20pm

Parents of children in more than one phase should drive for the later child's time.

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

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- 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 appear. 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 in 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.

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read "A. B. ...".

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