Working together to keep our schools and families safe this year

It's been a challenging couple of years, but Covid-19 cases remain high in our borough and the Omicron variant spreads very easily. Let's continue to do everything we can to stop the spread and keep our families and communities safe this school term.

1. My child is unwell - is it Covid?

It can be confusing. The best way to know is to get a PCR test if they have any of the below symptoms:

- Feverish
- A new, continuous cough
- A loss or change to sense of smell or taste

There are local test sites you can choose from, or if easier, you can get a test sent to you by post: www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test

Please note, the Omicron variant reportedly presents a different set of symptoms. It may feel like a common cold in some cases. Symptoms are not officially confirmed, but can include:

- Headache
- Upset tummy
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Unusually tired

Stay vigilant – particularly if a close contact has tested positive recently, or if there are cases in your child's school. Think – is it just a cold or could it be Covid?

2. My child has been in contact with someone who has tested positive, what do I do?

They should carry out a Lateral Flow Test every day for 7 days. If the test is negative, they can go to school as usual. Tests are best done in the morning before school. Remember, one in three people that are Covid positive have no symptoms, so testing is crucial.

Be cautious. Be careful. Be kind

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3. My child has tested positive – what happens next?

They must stay home for the full self-isolation period of either 10 days from the onset of symptoms or 10 days from the date of their test if they don't have any symptoms. This means they should not go to school. Please contact your school directly to arrange remote learning.

Those who are asymptomatic and test positive via LFT are no longer required to seek a confirmatory PCR test. Self-isolation starts from the positive LFT test.

If they remain without symptoms, on day 5 and 6 they can do a lateral flow test (24 hours apart) - if both are negative, and they have no temperature, they are free to end their isolation on day 6 and return to school. You can also test on day 7 and 8, or days 8 and 9. If they do not do these LFTs, they must isolate for the full 10 days. More information can be found in the image below.

NHS Test and Trace will ask about any close contacts of your child, so it's worth building a list of names and contact details for their peer groups in case you need it.

Visit the NHS website for more information: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do

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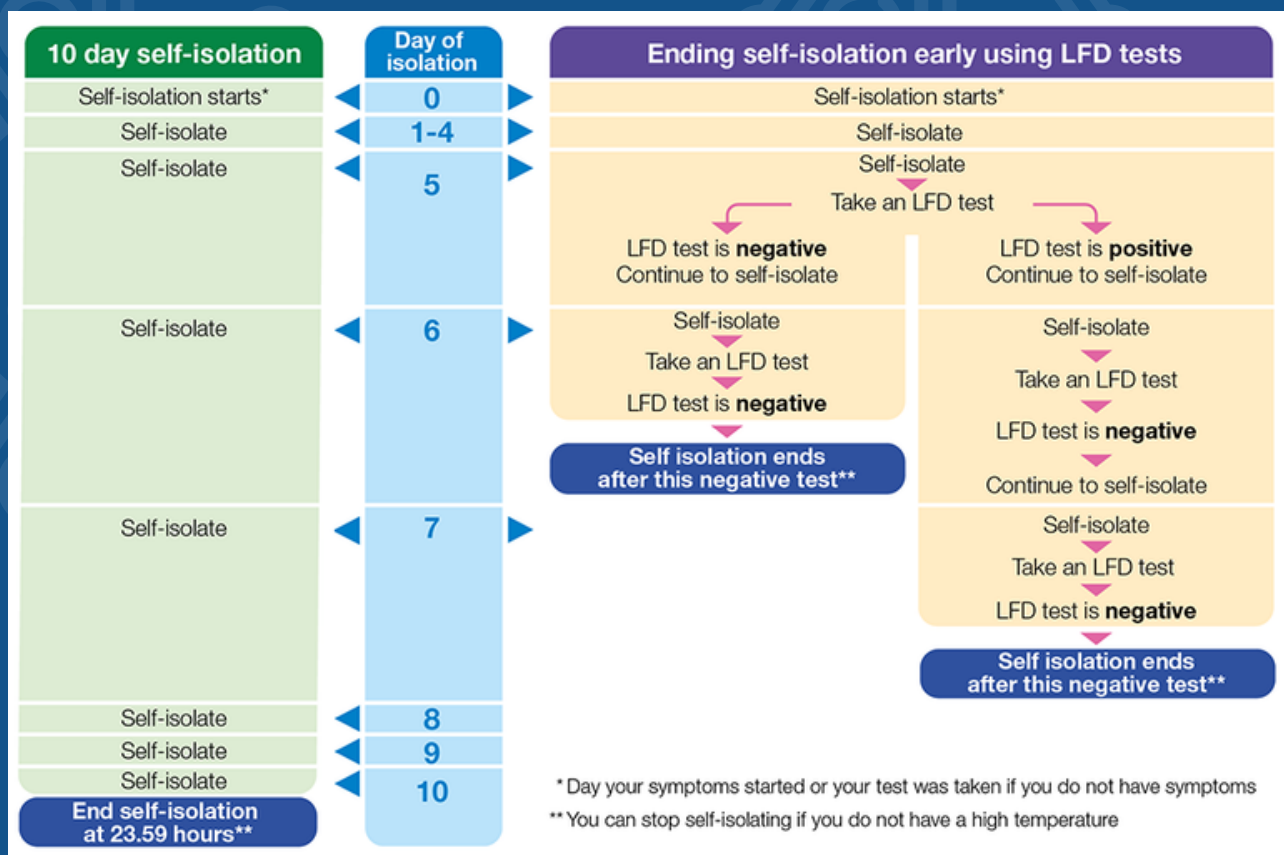
4. My child has no symptoms, but I am worried – what should I do?

Around 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 have no symptoms and can spread it without knowing – even if they've been vaccinated. Check that you and your family are safe by taking regular rapid Covid-19 tests (all those aged 11 years and above).

You can pick up Lateral Flow Tests for anyone in your household from a local test centre, or by ordering them through Gov.uk: www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests

All secondary school pupils and households should continue with regular testing:

- These tests should be taken twice weekly, ideally 3-5 days apart
- They're easy to do and you get your results in under 30 minutes
- You can pick up home testing kits from one of our local test centres
- Alternatively, you can order them from Gov.uk, or pick up kits from a local pharmacy

By playing your part and testing regularly, you will help us find more Covid-19 cases, break chains of transmission, and help protect our local communities.

Visit our website for more information: www.wokingham.gov.uk/community-testing

5. Will the Covid-19 vaccine protect my child from the virus?

Covid-19 is usually mild in most children, but it can make some children unwell. One dose of the vaccine gives good protection against your child getting seriously ill, but two doses gives stronger and longer-lasting protection.

Vaccinating children can also help stop the spread of Covid-19 to other people, including within schools.

Children can get a 1st dose of the vaccine from the day they turn 12. You can take them to a local walk-in vaccination centre or book an appointment through the NHS website (www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccine).

They will be given the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for both doses and the second dose should be 12 weeks after the first.

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