

Covid Reminders

30th June 2021

Dear Parents and Friends of Castle Hill,

As you are undoubtedly aware the number of Covid cases in schools across the UK, and indeed in Hampshire, are going up and overall there are increasing numbers of children and staff in schools having to self-isolate. We are working hard to keep our school community as safe as possible and continue to follow the Government and PHE Guidance. We really do appreciate your ongoing support to achieve this. We understand that, at times, sticking to the guidance may be hugely inconvenient and frustrating for all concerned, but we ask that you continue to be considerate and patient with the front office staff who are often the messengers.

The guidance is largely unchanged, but please see below for a few key reminders and answers to some frequently asked questions:

- If any **person is symptomatic**, i.e. has a new continuous cough, a temperature or a loss of smell or taste, they must **immediately self-isolate for a period of 10 days** from the onset of symptoms. This will also **apply to their household**. They must arrange to **complete a PCR test as soon as possible**. Please note that this applies even if returning a negative LFD result – we are aware of cases in which a positive PCR result has followed a negative LFD result due to the different nature of these tests. If a negative PCR result is returned, the period of self-isolation ceases, unless a member of the household becomes symptomatic, or individuals are notified that they are a close contact of a positive case.
- **LFD vs PCR Test:** There are two types of coronavirus tests, an LFD test is not the same as a PCR test. We appreciate it's easier to do an LFD test and feel more reassured, however, this may mean that the tests are not being used correctly and could result in further spread of Covid-19.

PCR Test is for people who have coronavirus symptoms

- The polymerase chain reaction (**PCR**) tests check for the genetic material (RNA) of the virus in the sample which is collected via a nose and throat swab
- PCR tests can be booked free of charge here: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119
- The test can be sent to people at home or they can attend a walk-through centre and the sample is sent for processing at a laboratory, where any viral RNA is isolated and collected
- Most people get their result the next day.

LFD Test is for people who do not have coronavirus symptoms (asymptomatic testing)

- Lateral Flow Device (**LFD**) tests are used to track asymptomatic cases and detect proteins called 'antigens' produced by the virus. If an antigen is detected it will be indicated on the testing strip
 - These simple and quick tests enable us to rapidly test without the need for a laboratory
 - They can be self-administered and the results are given in 30 minutes
 - LFD tests are useful to track those who have a lot of the virus, but are less effective at identifying those in the early stages of infection. LFD tests will not identify an incubating virus.
- **Infectious period:** Two days before the onset of symptoms to ten days after the onset of symptoms. If asymptomatic, two days before date first positive test was taken to ten days afterwards.

- **Isolation period:**

- **Cases**

- **Symptomatic:** Your isolation period includes the day your symptoms started and the next 10 full days. E.g. if your symptoms started at any time on the 15th of the month, your isolation period ends at 23:59 hrs on the 25th of the month.
- **Asymptomatic:** In the absence of symptoms, the isolation would start from the date of the positive COVID-19 test* was taken and continue for ten full days after this. E.g. if positive test was taken any time on the 15th of the month, your isolation period ends at 23:59 hrs on the 25th of the month.

- **Contacts:**

- Household contacts: Ten full days from first onset of symptoms in the household. Onset of symptoms is day 0
- Non-household contacts: Ten full days from last date of exposure. E.g. if your exposure date is 15th of the month, you should isolate for ten full days after this to 23:59 hrs on the 25th of the month
**For self-administered LFD tests (i.e. tests taken at home rather than at an assisted testing site) the legal duty to self-isolate is from PCR test date which may result in cases isolating longer than ten days if the date of the positive PCR test was taken was after the LFD positive test. It is recommended that people get a PCR test as soon as possible after an LFD test ideally on the same day where possible.*

If an asymptomatic close contact tests negative (by LFD or PCR test) during their isolation period they must still complete 10 days isolation from last exposure date before returning to school

- **How do I notify the school of a Positive Case within my household:** Please inform the school as soon as possible by emailing admin@chjs.net with the subject line "Covid Symptoms Alert" – this will help us to spot your email easily whilst monitoring the inbox.

Finally, we would like to draw your attention to the updated advice from PHE regarding routine PCR testing for all school-aged children who are self-isolating. To help control the spread of the COVID-19 Delta variant, Public Health England (PHE) is now recommending that, in the South East, close contacts of PCR positive individuals in schools and colleges take a voluntary PCR test through NHS Test and Trace as soon as possible, rather than waiting until day 5 of their 10-day isolation period as previously advised. This should be done even if they are not experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding during this ever-changing situation.

CHPS Team