

14th September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Please find below further details for parents from the PHE team at North Tyneside, to give more detail about our local infection rates, what families can do to help prevent the spread of the virus and what happens in school when there is a case.

I know you may be concerned following our first confirmed positive case, but I want to reassure you that our students have been following school protocols effectively and this has been keeping everyone safe. Last week's positive case was in our 6th form bubble - I know there has been a lot of speculation regarding who was affected, but I hope you can appreciate our need to follow PHE guidance regarding communication about the case and the fact that we cannot provide any more details in order to protect that child. As it was in the 6th form and affected a small number of Year 13s, I can confirm that **no students in Y7-11 are affected**. The part of the building used by Year 13 is not one where any Y7-11 students are allowed to go at present. Unfortunately, the nature of the virus is such that simply sitting next to someone who has tested positive requires action to prevent further spread, as we saw last week where a few other Year 13 students were asked to self-isolate as a precaution. I must stress that the school will always contact you directly by telephone if your child is deemed to be a close contact of a confirmed case.

COVID-19 information for parents from North Tyneside

North Tyneside like all other areas across the North East has seen significantly increasing rates of infection over the last few weeks and there is now widespread community transmission of the virus. Working closely with North Tyneside Council and Public Health England, the school continues to ensure that we operate safely and that we minimise the spread of the virus. This includes maintaining high standards of hygiene inside and outside classroom settings, grouping children in 'bubbles' and maintaining social distancing from staff wherever possible.

As parents or carers, you can support the endeavours to help control the virus in North Tyneside by adhering to the national restrictions, maintaining social distancing and good hand hygiene.

We are also asking that you please keep your child at home if anyone else in the household is suspected of having or has had a **positive test** for Covid-19, or if your child has any of the following **symptoms of Covid-19**:

- **A fever – this means hot to the touch on the chest or back**
- **A continuous cough - a dry cough and coughing a lot for over an hour with more than 3 episodes per day**
- **Loss or change of taste and smell - this means no smell or taste, or things smell or taste different to normal**

It is important that the whole household self isolates until anyone in the household with symptoms get tested as soon as any symptoms start to occur via www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or calling 119. **Only people with symptoms should get tested.**

If the test is positive the person will need self-isolate for 10 days, the rest of the household for 14 days.

The action we will take in school if a member of staff or a pupil has a positive test result for COVID-19 is as follows:

- As soon as we are informed of the positive test result, we will carry out a risk assessment with Public Health colleagues to identify any other children or staff who may have been a **close contact** with the confirmed case.
- If your child is **not identified as a close contact** of the confirmed case we will contact you to tell you that you do not need to make any change to your usual routine and that it is safe for your child to continue to attend school.
- If your **child is identified as having been in close contact** with the confirmed case, we will contact you and ask you to keep your child **at home to self-isolate for 14 days**, in line with government guidance. **Your child DOES NOT need to be tested.** Other members of your household or contacts of your child DO NOT need to self isolate and can continue normal activities. If your child does develop symptoms while self isolating then the household should self isolate and the child should get a test.

The evidence from the Chief Medical Officer is very clear that the balance of risk is strongly in favour of children attending school and that serious illness or deaths in children and teenagers from Covid-19 are extremely rare. Therefore, it is important that all children continue to attend school or college (unless asked to self-isolate) for their educational progress, for their wellbeing and for their wider development.

Our school protocols at Longbenton High School

A reminder that our main Covid school protocols and expectations are:

- Students **use hand sanitiser** on arrival and throughout the day on entering classrooms etc
- **Students wear masks in corridors and in communal spaces** – unless we have exemption information from parents. We cannot socially distance students in school within their bubbles – face masks are therefore important for staff and student safety when moving around the building. **Please note:** we cannot afford as a school to keep issuing masks to those who have forgotten to bring them. Parents will be contacted if students continue to arrive at school without a mask. If this happens on more than two occasions, students will not be allowed to socialise in communal areas at break and/or lunch and will have this time supervised by staff.
- Students keep to the **left/single file in corridors** (one-way system in KS3 bubble as there are two stairwells).
- Students **stay in their own 'bubble' or zone**, use their own entrance/exit and toilets and do not cross bubbles.
- **Students maintain social distance from staff** (there is an area at the front of the classroom which enables teachers to keep 2m distance) and staff keep social distance from other staff.

- **Staff wear visors and/or masks** when they are in corridors and communal spaces, as we have asked students to do.

Please also find below a quick reference guide for different scenarios related to Covid:

| What happens if... | Action needed | Next steps | When can they end isolation? |
|---|---|---|---|
| A student or staff member displays Covid symptoms in school Covid symptoms are: -high temperature -continuous, dry cough -change in sense of taste/smell | Isolated until they go home. If household members eg siblings are in school they will also be asked to leave the site. Test needs to be booked and no return until confirmation of results. | Positive case – PHE informed and action directed. Negative case – can return to school / work. Siblings – as below for household members. | Return to school after 10 days, even if you have a cough or loss of sense of smell/taste as these can last for several weeks after the infection is gone. If high temperature persists, you must still self-isolate. |
| A student or staff member has cold/flu symptoms but not Covid symptoms | Normal absence management. No test needed. | | |
| A student or staff member phones in with Covid symptoms | Stay off school and book a test. Household members eg siblings also stay off school for self-isolation but no test required for them unless directed to by track and trace. | Positive case – PHE informed and action directed. Negative case – can return to school. | Return to school after 10 days, even if you have a cough or loss of sense of smell/taste, as these symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone. If high temperature persists, you must still self-isolate. |
| A student or staff member has no Covid symptoms but tests positive | Stay off school for 10 days. School contact PHE for next steps. | Directed by PHE | After 10 days since test if no symptoms have developed. |
| A household member is displaying Covid symptoms | Household member should get tested. Other household members only get tested if displaying symptoms. School staff/student self isolates with household for 14 days. | Students access work through Google Classroom and staff set appropriate work whilst student works at home. Staff to remote work from home. | After 14 days since the illness of the first person testing positive started if showing no symptoms. |
| A student or a staff member is a contact through track and trace or contacted by the school to be told they are a ‘close contact’ | Stay at home for 14 days from the point of contact with the infectious person, regardless of test result. Test to be taken when displaying symptoms. | If a positive result PHE informed and direct action taken. Parents will be contacted if their child has been in contact / is considered a ‘close contact’. Isolation for 14 days but no need for a test | After 14 days of contact with infectious person, if displaying no symptoms. |
| A household member is a contact through track and trace (eg a sibling at another school is sent home) | The ‘contact’ must self-isolate. Other members of the household <u>do not</u> need to self-isolate if no one is displaying symptoms. If the contact displays symptoms a test is needed for that person. | If positive test, house isolates for 14 days and PHE direct action. | If ‘contact’ is displaying symptoms but test is negative then household can return to school unless they have symptoms. |

I appreciate how challenging this situation is for you and your family. All of the staff here appreciate your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

Kelly Holbrook
Headteacher