



22nd March 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

Information and advice about COVID-19 cases in school

As you may be aware, the government published its plan for 'Living with Covid' in February 2022 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19>). While the remaining legal restrictions to manage COVID-19 have now been removed, the virus has not 'disappeared' and the pandemic continues. We all need to take sensible measures to protect ourselves, each other and the most vulnerable from the virus's effects.

As advised in the government plan, the school continues to follow Public Health guidance to manage any cases of COVID-19 and we ask for your support in doing this.

We have been advised that there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the school. We know that you may find this concerning, but we are continuing to monitor the situation and are working closely with Newcastle City Council's Public Health Team and the UK Health Security Agency. This letter is to inform you of the current situation and provide advice on how to support your child.

We advise that all confirmed cases of COVID-19 **do not** attend school until the end of their self-isolation period. They should stay at home and follow the '**People with Covid and Their Contacts**' guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-people-with-covid-19-and-their-contacts>)

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID-19

For most people, especially children, COVID-19 will be a mild illness.

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature and/or
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

However, these symptoms **do not** always present themselves and COVID-19 may appear in other ways. Other symptoms linked with COVID-19 include shortness of breath, fatigue, loss of appetite, muscle ache, sore throat, headache, stuffy or runny

nose, diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting. Any of these symptoms may also have another cause.

If your child develops any of the symptoms of COVID-19, no matter how mild, they should **not** attend school. Please take a precautionary approach and follow public health guidance. They should **remain at home** and **get a PCR test** as soon as possible. They should do this even if they have received one or more doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Whilst the Government has said that from the 1 April 2022, it will no longer provide free universal symptomatic testing for the public, until then PCR tests are free of charge.

To book a free PCR test, either call 119 or go to the NHS website at www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test

If the test is positive, they should self-isolate.

If the test result is negative your child can attend school as normal.

If the PCR test is positive, your child should self-isolate for up to 10 days from the date the symptoms first started. If your child does not have symptoms, but tests positive for COVID-19 using a Lateral Flow Device they should self-isolate, from the date the test was taken.

In this time your child **should not** go to school or to public areas: they should remain at home and not mix with anyone outside of their household. They may be able to leave self-isolation early before the end of 10 full days if:

- They take two Lateral Flow Device tests on consecutive days (12-24 hours apart) **no earlier than the 5th** after the day their symptoms started (or the date of their test if they did not have symptoms), and another LFD test on the following day.
- Both test results are **negative**
- They **do not** have a **high temperature**

They can leave isolation and return to school after their second consecutive negative test result if they do not have a high temperature. For example: If the first test is taken on Day 5 and another the following day (Day 6) and both are negative, and your child **does not** have a high temperature, they can end their self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to school on Day 6. If however, the test on Day 5 is positive, but is negative the next day (Day 6), they must take another test the next day (Day 7). If this is negative, they can return to school after the second negative result.

They should only end their self-isolation after they have had 2 negative LFD tests taken on consecutive days from Day 5. They should stop testing after they have had 2 consecutive negative test results.

If your child is not released from self-isolation early, they should not take another LFD test after the 10th day of their isolation period and can stop self-isolating after this day. This is because they are unlikely to be infectious after the 10th day of their isolation period. Those who continue to feel unwell after 10 days should seek medical advice.

There is a handy diagram on the self-isolation period at the end of this letter to help.

Your child should not take a PCR test if they have had a positive PCR test result in the last 90 days, unless they develop any new symptoms of COVID-19. This is because it is possible for PCR tests to remain positive for some time after COVID-19 infection.

Where to get Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Tests

Whilst the Government has said that from the 1 April 2022, it will no longer provide free universal asymptomatic (LFD) testing for the public, until then these are free of charge.

There are different ways to get LFDs for use at home.

- Go online to order for home delivery to <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>
- Pick one up from a local pharmacy or collection point – put in your postcode at <https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/> to find your nearest one. You can also call into a local pharmacy and ask if they have any LFD home test kits.
- Go online to <https://test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/collect-lateral-flow-kits> and add your details to get a 'collect code' to give to the pharmacist for free home test kit. If you cannot go online, you can get a code by calling 119 (free from landlines and mobiles. Lines are open from 7am to 11pm.)
- Call 119 for free and request a LFD test kit.

Test kits can be re-ordered every 3 days. Occasionally supplies run short. You should keep checking locally and online to obtain supplies.

From the 1 April LFD test kits will be on sale in many pharmacies.

Support to Self-Isolate

If your child is entitled to an income-based Free School Meal this will still be provided.

If you need support with self-isolation Newcastle City Council's Welfare and Wellbeing Team may be able to help you. If you can, you should try to seek help from your friends, family and community first, or look at www.newcastle.gov.uk for local support services. Where this is not possible, the Welfare and Wellbeing team can help.

Visit www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfare or call 0800 170 7001 (8am-8pm Monday to Friday, 9am-3pm Saturday) to get the support you need.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19:

Remember; '**Hands, Face, Space, Let fresh air in, Test when you have symptoms, Self-isolate when you test positive or have symptoms, Get vaccinated**':

- Wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze. Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards.
- Try to stay apart from anyone you don't live with as much as possible.
- Use a face covering when you are indoors in crowded places such as supermarkets and public transport
- If meeting others, try to do so outside as much as possible and if inside, open the window to let fresh air in
- Try to limit contact with vulnerable people
- Get vaccinated. The vaccines against COVID-19 are safe and effective and give you the best protection against the virus. There are locations across the city where you can be vaccinated; for details go to www.newcastle.gov.uk/covidvaccine

Further information

Further information is available at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

A D Thorpe

Mrs A D Thorpe
Headteacher

When to end self-isolation if you have had COVID-19 symptoms or have received a positive COVID-19 test result

