



Community † Compassion † Wisdom

30 August 2020

Re: Update on procedures for dealing with suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases in school

Dear Parents

I hope you and your families have enjoyed the summer holidays. During the break, we have continued to prepare for the full reopening of school to all of our pupils on Wednesday 2nd September. Following our INSET day on 1st September, all preparations will be complete and we will be ready to welcome your children back. Whilst we cannot promise that there is no risk to your family, we have planned a range of protective measures to ensure the risk is as low as possible. It is encouraging that cases of COVID-19 in our local area (West Oxfordshire) remain very low.

There have been some changes to the Government guidance over the summer in areas such as singing and face coverings, but our plans for our full reopening, included in my letter in July, remain the same.

Prior to the beginning of the school term, I wanted to write to update you on the procedures for dealing with suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases in school. During the Summer Term, when there was a suspected case of COVID-19, bubbles were closed while we awaited testing and subsequent test results.

From September, in line with Government guidance, bubbles will NOT close while we await test results for the member of the bubble displaying COVID-19 symptoms. It is important to remember that the COVID 19 symptoms are common symptoms of other illnesses and, in the vast majority of cases, those who are tested do not test positive for COVID-19. The change of approach reflects the falling prevalence of cases locally and nationally. It also accounts for the likelihood of pupils displaying symptoms increasing as we approach the winter cold and flu season, potentially leading to mass disruption for pupils and their parents with regular closures.

To aid transparency, I will notify parents, via DOJO, if a member of their child's bubble is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 and is therefore going to be tested. Enhanced cleaning will take place but no further actions will be taken until the test results are received. All other children in the bubble should continue to attend school as normal. The person with symptoms, and their household, will need to self-isolate until the test results are received. If the test is positive, we will follow the government guidelines as detailed below.

When a member of the school community receives a positive test result for COVID-19

Schools should contact the local health protection team. This team will also contact schools directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended the school – as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

The health protection team will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate.

The health protection team will work with schools in this situation to guide them through the actions they need to take. Based on the advice from the health protection team, schools must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. Close contact means:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

The health protection team will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a class or group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period they should follow [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). They should get a test, and:

- if the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period. This is because they could still develop the coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days.
- if the test result is positive, they should inform their setting immediately, and should isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 14-day isolation period). Their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)

If there a two or more confirmed cases at school

If schools have two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, they may have an outbreak and must continue to work with their local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other pupils self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole site or year group. If schools are implementing controls from this list, addressing the risks they have identified and therefore reducing transmission risks, whole school closure based on cases within the school will not generally be necessary, and should not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.

In consultation with the local Director of Public Health, where an outbreak in a school is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will first focus on the person's class, followed by their year group, then the whole school if necessary, in line with routine public health outbreak control practice.

Please support us by contacting us as soon as possible if someone in your household is displaying one or more of the symptoms of COVID-19, even if it is outside of school hours. Working together in this way will help keep the school community and wider families safe and will be particularly important for our pupils and family members who are clinically extremely vulnerable and clinically vulnerable.

We are very much looking forward to seeing the children back in school on Wednesday. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us as soon as possible.

Yours Sincerely

Rachel Joannou
Headteacher