

From the Principal

26th November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Managing the return to School for pupils, students, and staff in receipt of positive test notifications for Covid-19

As a School we now find ourselves having needed to respond to and manage positive test notifications for Covid-19, in all year cohorts. You will appreciate that this requires a different lens in relation to the positive persons themselves, those identified as close-contacts, and those who continue to have onsite or home learning but are in neither of those most closely affected contexts.

In acknowledgement that school leaders are not health professionals, clinical advice is sought around decisions and the management of cases – in our case from the West Midlands East Local Health Protection Team – a part of Public Health England. I routinely draw upon this expertise. Between the start of term in September and today, we have responded to 33 positive notifications in total across the school community – now a community of approximately 1100 children and 130 staff.

We are therefore at a stage where we plan for and receive pupils, students, and staff returning to learn and work onsite in circumstances where they have received a positive test outcome - and have been to varying degrees unwell. It may be useful to you that I relay information provided to me by our LHPT around this guidance, and relevant processes. I understand fully that families may be curious or even anxious about this 'behind the scenes' management.

A person who tests positive:

When a person receives a positive test notification, self-isolation and care is required for a 10 day period. If the person has Covid-related symptoms, the 10 days starts from the onset of those symptoms. If the person does not exhibit symptoms (they are asymptomatic) the 10 days starts from the date the test was undertaken. If Covid-related symptoms develop after the test, self-isolation continues for a further 10 days from when symptoms start.

We recognise widely at this stage in the pandemic that Covid-related symptoms are a high temperature (37.8C or above), onset of a persistent cough, or a loss of sense of smell or taste.

Having tested positive, people are able to stop self-isolating after 10 days if symptoms are gone, or they just have a cough or changes to the sense of smell or taste - as these can last for weeks after the infection has gone. Any on-going high temperature or fever signals the need for continued self-isolation.

People who are Covid-positive are also asked to continue self-isolating if they have any of the symptoms below after their initial 10 days of self-isolation:

- a high temperature or feeling hot and shivery
- a runny nose or sneezing
- feeling or being sick
- diarrhoea

Self-isolation should only stop when these symptoms have gone. Furthermore, if a person has diarrhoea or experiences vomiting, they stay at home until 48 hours after that has stopped.

If after taking a first test resulting in a positive outcome, the person takes a further test after the initial 10 day period of self-isolation, and subsequently receives another positive outcome, as long as the person is clear of Covid-related symptoms for 48 hours from the date of the latest result and has not taken paracetamol then the person can return to school for learning or work. If coronavirus symptoms remain, then the person is required to self-isolate for a further 10 days from the additional test result.

A person who is asked to self-isolate having been identified as a close contact of a person who has tested positive:

- National guidance outlines that a period of self-isolation is put in place for 14 days after the last point of close contact with the person in receipt of a positive notification
- People can return to normal activities if they are well at the end of the 14 day period of self-isolation – including returning to school or places of work
- Other members of the household can continue normal activities provided the close-contact person does not develop symptoms within the 14 day period of self-isolation
- Close-contact persons who themselves develop symptoms should remain at home for at least 10 days from the date when their symptoms appear, and are eligible for a coronavirus test.

I provide the considerable level of operational detail here in recognition of a number of queries received into school about Covid-related actions taken and school based responses. I hope this offers reassurance about the risk assessment processes that are undertaken and implemented – informed always by clinical guidance.

I offer my on-going appreciation of your support for the School at this time.

Yours sincerely,



Colin Townsend
Principal