

12th January 2021

POSITIVE CASE OF COVID-19 – New Forest School Totton

Dear Parents,

Confirmed Positive Case of COVID-19

We have today received confirmation of a positive COVID-19 case within our Totton Site. The positive case is with a member of staff. They are currently doing well and been offered support from the school whilst self-isolating.

This letter is to inform you of the current situation and provide advice on how to support your child. Please be reassured that for most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

The students and staff who have been in close contact with the individual who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) have been contacted by phone and are now self-isolating for 10 days from the last time they had contact with the member of staff. They are not currently able to use Lateral Flow Testing daily to remain in school (please see details below regarding this).

In addition to our usual enhanced daily cleaning, the Totton Site has also been 'fogged' this evening with anti-viral solution.

The school remains open and your child is able to continue to attend as normal if they remain well and you are happy for them to attend.

Conflicting Guidance

Unfortunately, this afternoon/evenings work to deal with the confirmed positive case has been hampered somewhat but conflicting guidance.

As the Headteacher, my first port of call is to report the positive case to the Department for Education. I then receive a follow up call from Public Health England to discuss the specifics of the positive case and am provided with advice.

I have previously shared with all parents/carers the Department for Education guidance regarding Lateral Flow Testing and its use following a positive case to allow close contacts (staff and students) to continue attending school with daily tests.

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To support this significant work has been undertaken over the New Year and last week to set up testing facilities, train staff and test over 100 staff/students.

However, when discussing the plan to begin daily testing of close contacts with Public Health England, I was advised not to do this and that staff/students classed as close contacts must self-isolate for 10 days.

When I queried this my questions were escalated within Public Health England but the return call provided the same advice.

I currently have no explanation for the conflicting guidance from the Department for Education versus Public Health England. In conjunction with New Forest Care's Directors and our Health Team we have chosen to follow Public Health England's advice, given the medical background of the Team I spoke with. However, I will tomorrow be pursuing this with the Department for Education to get clarity over the situation.

To be clear, this relates only to the daily use of Lateral Flow Testing for close contacts over 7 school days.

The weekly testing of students and staff as a way of catching asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 will continue and is seen as an important measure in keeping students and staff safe.

COVID-19 Advice

Following a positive case and in conjunction with Public Health England, I am required to provide the following advice regarding COVID-19.

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must not come to school and should remain at home for at least **10 days** from the date when their symptoms appeared. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for a PCR test (the normally available test type) and this can be arranged via <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.

All other household members who remain well, must stay at home and not leave the house for 10 days. This includes anyone in your 'Support Bubble'.

Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

The 10-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

Household members should not go to work, school or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home.

If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you should ask friends or family. Alternatively, you can order your shopping online and medication by phone or online.

Household members staying at home for 10 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community

If you are able, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period.

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

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

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

If your child does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from the nhs.uk website at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/>. If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, or they are worsening you can seek advice from NHS 111 at <https://111.nhs.uk/> or by phoning 111.

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

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Do

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- 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

Further Information

Further information is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Yours sincerely
Headteacher

Kind regards,



Duncan Smith
Headteacher