Thursday 25th February 2020

COVID-19 testing for staff and pupils

Dear Parents and Carers

We are delighted to welcome back all pupils into school on the 8th March, both Primary and Secondary pupils. We have been looking at the best way to implement the testing regime in school in preparation for reopening on the 8th March for our Secondary pupils. We are inviting secondary pupils back into school on the 3rd,4th and 5th of March to be tested in preparation for Monday 8th. We have decided that the easiest and quickest way to do this is by:

* pupils coming into school on their allocated days by transport rather than year group. The taxis and minibuses will bring pupils into school on their usual transport and then return them home after they have had their test. For pupils who travel independently or are transported by parents you can bring in your child into school anytime within the three days of the 3rd,4th and 5th of March. You will be informed of the test result as soon as we have it. Taxis and minibuses will be collecting your child on the following days and at their usual morning pick –up time:-

**Wednesday 3rd March**

Nightingales – all 5 buses

Croft Bus

East Durham Taxis

Jacksons

**Thursday 4th March**

Bell cabs

Fair Fayre

Stanley Taxis

Croft Taxi

Dave’s minibus

Wendy’s taxi

MSP Executive

Tony’s Taxi

JD taxis

**Friday 5th March**

Beeline minibus

Dave’s

DH7 Taxis

Stanley Travel

Newcastle Taxi

Molly’s

Burnopfield

Lincab

Wizz Green Bus

Stanley

This does not affect the pupils who are currently attending school as part of our vulnerable child and key worker bubble. These pupils should continue to attend school as normal next week.

If you **DO NOT** want your child to be tested could you inform school by Monday 1st March at 3.00 otherwise we will assume you want your child collected on the allocated day and tested and will inform transport. Also coming home with this letter is the consent form which **MUST** be completed and returned with your child.

* Your child will be tested in school using a lateral flow test. This test takes 30 minutes to produce a result – either positive or negative. Your child does not have to wait in school for the result, as you will receive the result via text message or email.
* A small group of staff have been fully trained to administer tests. We will be using the next 2 weeks to show the pupils how to administer the tests themselves.
* The pupils will receive 3 tests in school over a 2 week period.
* Following this period, pupils will be given home testing kits in order to test themselves at home, twice weekly. By this time most pupils should be confident to do this with your guidance, however our fully trained testing team will be on hand to offer advice if you need it.
* We understand that there may be a small group of pupils who will need to be tested in school. We will work with parents and carers to establish this group and we will continue to offer tests in school to those pupils.
* Please note that this is asymptomatic testing. The tests are designed to identify cases in the community of people who are not showing any symptoms. We will not test pupils who are showing symptoms, they will be sent home for a PCR test. Please DO NOT send your child into school if they have symptoms of COVID-19
* I must stress that these tests are not compulsory but they will have a huge impact in keeping everyone safe and the more pupils who have the tests during this first week and then in the week beginning the 8th March the safer it is for everyone. Effective testing will drastically reduce the risk of transmission.

Staff and students in the secondary department of school are advised to wear face coverings in all areas, including classrooms, where social distancing cannot be maintained and as a temporary extra measure. The Government are going to review this at Easter.

**Settling back in and ‘catching-up**’

I know that many of you will be concerned about the impact of this second lockdown on your child’s learning. On the return to school we will be quickly re-establishing school routines and expectations as well as working on identifying children who have found lockdown particularly difficult emotionally or academically. We will plan appropriate teaching to support children to make progress. We are fortunate to have additional staff to support with small group teaching and this will be used where we feel children will benefit from it. Parents’ evenings will take place over the phone or TEAMS after the Easter holidays and teachers will talk to you about how your child is doing.

**Children or adults must not come into school if any of the following apply:**

• Any symptoms of coronavirus (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense

• of smell or taste)

• A positive Covid test result

• Someone they live with has symptoms or tested positive

• Someone in their support bubble has symptoms and they have been in close contact with them since their symptoms started or during the 48 hours before they started

• Someone in their support bubble tested positive and they’ve been in close contact with them since they had the test or in the 48 hours before their test

• They have been told they’ve been in contact with someone who tested positive – find out what to do if you're told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app

**NHS Test and Trace**

All members of the school community are expected to engage with the NHS Test and Trace process, and we ask that you follow the following procedure where necessary:

• Collect children immediately if they display symptoms of Covid-19 whilst at school.

• Self-isolating and booking a test (all children and young people can be tested, including children under 5).

• Provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for COVID-19 or if asked by NHS Test and Trace.

• Self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who develops COVID-19 symptoms or someone who tests positive for COVID-19.

Anyone who displays symptoms of COVID-19 can and should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the NHS website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet.

Parents should inform school immediately of the results of a test.

• If someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to Covid, they can stop self-isolating (they could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu - in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better - other members of their household can stop self-isolating).

• If someone tests positive, they should follow the Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and must self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (this is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone - the 7-day period starts from the day when they first became ill - if they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal, and other

members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days).

Should an outbreak occur at school, we will follow the guidance of the Health Protection Team. This will include sending home any staff or children who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive and advising them to self- isolate for 10 days since they were last in contact with that person when they were infectious.

I hope this answers any question you may have about the testing in school but should you require any further information please don’t hesitate to get in touch via the school email or by phoning school.

Looking forward to seeing you all back on the 8th March.

Yours Sincerely

Lee Davis