My ref: Parent Letter – Spring 2022

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Contact: Please contact your school

for more information

To parents/carers of pupils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Schools and Colleges



Public Health Directorate Education Directorate

Dear Parent / Carer,

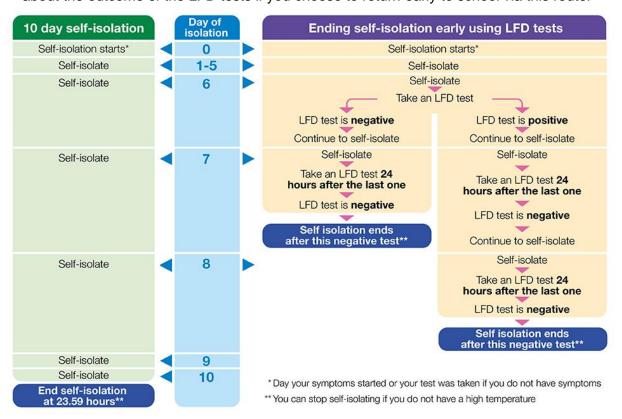
As you will be aware, Covid-19 is sadly still with us as we go into 2022. We are once again seeing a rapid increase in cases in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and across the country. With the start of the new term, we wanted to thank you for your support during this incredibly challenging time.

Our priority is to keep all students and staff safe and well, and ensure we are able to identify any new cases at an early stage, including when people have no symptoms. Early identification will help us to prevent onward transmission and minimise case rates in our education settings. If fewer children get Covid, fewer children will have to isolate, and they will not spread it to vulnerable adults who may get unwell and need hospitalisation. The Local Authority will continue to work closely with school leaders to minimise any disruption to learning. School leaders and Public Health teams will be monitoring the impact of cases on pupils, their families and the workforce. If your child's school needs to return to remote learning, the school will notify you at the earliest possible stage.

The Government have updated their guidance in recent weeks and alongside our guidance locally, the key messages for this term are below –

- The Government is temporarily recommending that face coverings are worn in classrooms and teaching spaces for students in year 7 or above (those aged 11 and over), in light of the highly transmissible Omicron variant surge. Teachers will not be required to wear face coverings in classrooms. This builds on the existing guidance that recommends face coverings for all adults in communal areas of all settings and for pupils on school as well as public transport. The advice on face coverings in classrooms will be in place until the 26 January, when Plan B regulations are currently scheduled to expire.
- Local Authorities, Directors of Public Health and Health Protection teams may recommend
  measures described in the <u>contingency framework</u> in individual education and childcare settings
   or a small cluster of settings as part of their outbreak management responsibilities.
- Parents and other visitors are strongly advised to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test before
  entering the premises of a childminder, early years setting, school, or college. All visitors to
  schools to wear face coverings in school buildings and whilst on the school site.
- If the number of positive cases substantially increases in your child's early years setting, school, college, or area, you might be advised to increase the use of lateral flow device (LFD) testing.
   This could also include advice on the reintroduction of onsite LFD testing for secondary age pupils.
- If you have a case of Covid-19 in your household, please refer to the diagram at the end of this letter for the current advice on how to minimise infection spreading in the household. Household and community transmission is likely to be the key factor in impacting upon schools.

- Vaccination is our best defence against Covid. The vaccination programme for 12 to 15-year-olds is well underway and parents can now book an appointment at a local vaccination site via the NHS booking service Book or manage your coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination NHS (www.nhs.uk) or by phoning 119. Around 60% of pupils in Cambridgeshire and 37% of pupils in Peterborough have had their first dose of the vaccine. They can have their second dose 12 weeks after the first dose; it is important to get both doses to prevent Covid-19 spreading in schools and for those who have not had their first dose to get it. Further information will be sent on the second dose for 12 to 15 year olds through schools. We are working with Health colleagues to provide more on-school site vaccination sessions. We would also encourage the 16 and 17 year olds who have not had both doses to access their vaccination. The NHS will directly contact parents of eligible children aged 5 to 11 years regarding their vaccination.
- Attendance remains mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age. This means it's your legal duty as a parent to send your child to school regularly if they are registered at one. If you have concerns about your child attending, you should discuss these with your school or college.
- If you child has had Covid, the isolation period <u>can be</u> reduced to 7 days providing two negative lateral flow tests on days 6 and 7 are returned and they do not have a temperature. The diagram below outlines this process, and I would ask you provide confirmation to your school about the outcome of the LFD tests if you choose to return early to school via this route.



• In the second half of the autumn term, we saw increased cases of Covid-19 which had a significant impact on the staffing capacity of several schools. If the number of cases continues to rise, we may see closure of classes and remote learning being necessary again. Schools have prepared for this, but I ask you to support schools at this difficult time. Schools will use a variety of approaches to deliver education, but live learning will not always be practical when teachers are unwell. Please support your child's education where you can, and we would strongly recommend you access the <a href="National Oak Academy">National Oak Academy</a> for free and useful teaching resources. If you need support accessing ICT, please contact your child's school.

- To protect staff, we have recommended that they socially distance and staff meetings should remain virtual. Schools will also consider their own circumstances, but we recommend that until the end of January all non-essential events where parents visit schools are to be held virtually if possible.
- Secondary school pupils will be required to take one on-site test when they return to school
  this week. We continue to promote the importance of twice-weekly LFD testing for staff and
  students in secondary schools and staff in primary schools. There is no need for primary
  age pupils (those in year 6 and below) to test regularly, unless they have been identified as
  a contact for someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 and therefore take lateral flow
  tests every day for 7 days. Schools will notify you of this process should your child be
  identified as being a close contact.

As well as the measures above, it is important that we all continue to wear face coverings, wash our hands regularly for at least 20 seconds, meet people we don't usually meet outdoors or in well ventilated spaces, and keep our distance from people where possible. It is through working together that we will have a better chance of stopping Covid-19 spreading. We know that school leaders have really appreciated the support of parents and carers in managing the impact of the pandemic and as we move into this next period, we thank you for your continued efforts.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Lewis
Service Director – Education
Cambridgeshire County Council and
Peterborough City Council

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Director of Public Health
Cambridgeshire County Council and
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# How to reduce the spread of infection with the people you live with if you have COVID-19.

If you have COVID-19, there is a high risk that others in your household will catch it from you. There are several things you can do to reduce the spread of infection in your household.

Limit close contact with others. Spend as little time as possible in communal areas.



Pegularly clean frequently touched surfaces and shared rooms like kitchens and bathrooms.



Wash your hands regularly using soap and water, particularly after coughing and sneezing.





Use a face covering if you need to spend time in shared spaces.





Catch coughs and sneezes in disposable tissues and put them straight in the bin.







## COVID-19 Guidance for Parents/Carers from 23rd December 2021



For any **SUSPECTED** or **CONFIRMED** case of COVID-19 in a child/young person please follow the flow chart below

### SUSPECTED case if child/young person has COVID-19 symptoms

#### **Key symptoms:**

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

Additional symptoms that may be early warning signs of Covid-19 in children include upset stomach, headache, sore throat, unusual fatigue.

Book a **PCR test** as soon as possible online via the website <a href="www.nhs.uk/coronavirus">www.nhs.uk/coronavirus</a>. Alternatively, a PCR test can be ordered by phoning **119** for those without internet.

Ensure child/young person isolates at home until the test result is known. The rest of the household does **NOT NEED** to isolate if they are:

- Under 18 and 6 /months, or
- Fully vaccinated, or
- Part of a Covid Vaccine trial, or
- Exempt for other reason

If none of the above apply, then household contacts must isolate until test result.

Result of test

NEGATIVE

POSITIVE

Child/Young person can return to setting once well.

CONFIRMED case(s) following a
Positive PCR Test

#### **Positive PCR Result**

Inform the setting of positive PCR. Ensure child/young person isolates at home for 7 days. They should take LFD tests on days 6 and day 7, at least 24 hours apart, and if both tests are negative, they can leave self-isolation as soon as they have a negative result from the second test provided they do not have a raised temperature.

If they decide not to carry out LFD testing or if they have a raised temperature on day 7, then they should continue with their self-isolation for the **full 10 days**. Children aged 0 to 5 years should isolate for 10 days but parents have the discretion of doing LFD tests on Days 6 & 7 if they want their child to end isolation earlier.

# CONFIRMED case(s) following a Positive LFD Test

#### **Positive LFD Result**

Inform setting of positive LFD
Take a PCR test <u>WITHIN 2 DAYS</u> of positive
LFD - Online at <u>www.nhs.uk/coronavirus</u> or by phoning 119.

Child/young person and any unvaccinated adults who are close contacts must self-isolate whilst waiting for the PCR test result.

#### **Negative PCR Result**

Child/young person and unvaccinated adults who are close contacts can stop isolation and can return to the setting. Restart twice weekly LFD home testing in secondary aged pupils.

# **Contacts of Positive Cases**

Household/close contacts who are fully vaccinated or under 18 years 6 months should do daily LFD tests for 7 days. The daily LFD should be done before leaving home for the first time each day. If during this time the LFD test is positive, the individual must self-isolate and arrange a PCR test. Children aged 0 to 5 years who are contacts of someone who tests positive are exempt from self-isolation and do not need to take part in daily LFD testing. They will be advised to take a PCR test if they are a household contact.

Household/close contacts only need to self-isolate for 10 days if they are over 18 years & 6 months <u>and</u> have not been fully vaccinated. **Unvaccinated adult household/close contacts must isolate for 10 days.** 

If anyone else in the household becomes unwell and tests positive for Covid-19 the positive person will need to restart/start their isolation. The rest of the family who have been isolating, do not need to extend their isolation period.

- With the emergence of the highly transmissible Omicron Variant, we continue to ask families/children to wash hands regularly, keep spaces well ventilated, wear face coverings (if aged 11 and over) in crowded public indoor areas, maintain distance, get vaccinated and take LFD tests prior to meeting people outside your household.
- Face coverings are to be worn by everyone over the age of 11yrs unless exempt on transport to and from educational settings.
- LFD test = Lateral Flow Device tests are rapid tests that can be used at home and the result is available within 30 minutes.
- PCR test = polymerase chain reaction test that can be booked online and is sent to a lab for the result.
- If you have previously received a positive Covid-19 PCR test result within the last 90 days and you are identified as a contact of someone with Covid-19 you should not take a PCR test. You should only take a PCR test if you develop any NEW symptoms of Covid-19 or if you have a positive LFD test result, or if you are required to take a PCR test upon entry into the UK.
- LFD tests are used for identifying Covid-19 infection where there are no symptoms. If you have symptoms always book a PCR test.
- LFD tests are safe to use in pregnancy. They are not recommended for children under 5 years of age but can be used at parent/guardian discretion.
- If you have had a Covid-19 vaccination you should still take part in the LFD testing as you may still transmit the virus.
- If you have had a recent nosebleed, or have a nose piercing, use the other nostril to swab for the LFD test. Always follow the instructions on the pack as there are different types of LFD tests.