

18.4.22

Dear Parents and Carers,

From 1 April, government guidance in relation to COVID changed, as part of Living with Covid arrangements. These changes have significant implications in relation to access to PCR and lateral flow testing, self-isolation arrangements, and access to remote learning. Please can we advise you to take a few minutes to read through the updated information below.

Should students and pupils be using lateral flow tests or PCR tests?

Most people in England are no longer advised to get tested. Lateral flow tests are no longer available from schools. Free NHS PCR tests are no longer routinely available. Twice weekly lateral flow testing is no longer recommended, and pupils/students are not expected to carry out a LFT if they feel unwell or have COVID symptoms. There are a small number of people who will still be able to get free COVID-19 tests from the NHS:

- If you have a health condition which means you're eligible for new COVID-19 treatments
- If you're going into hospital for surgery or a procedure
- If you work in the NHS or in social care

What if students/pupils have COVID symptoms or feel unwell?

Students/pupils are not expected to take a lateral flow test and, in most cases, will not be able to get a PCR test. The emphasis now is on whether a child feels well enough to attend school, if they do not have a high temperature. The guidance set out by the government in England is as follows:

• If a student/pupil has a minor illness and does still feel well enough to attend school, they should continue to attend school provided that they do not have a high temperature. **Please note that the school can refuse your child if they consider it necessary to protect other staff and pupils taking into account the advice of public health.**

- If a student/pupil is not well enough to attend school they should remain at home. They should return to school as soon as they feel well enough to, provided that they no longer have a high temperature. Please notify school of absence in the normal way.

Please be aware that attendance is compulsory for all students/pupils of school age. If you have any concerns about your child attending you should discuss these with your school. If your child is aged 12 or over and at higher risk of serious illness, meaning they are immunosuppressed, they should follow the guidance of their hospital consultant. All medical information should be shared with schools so they can carry out an individualised risk assessment.

What if a student/pupil has a positive COVID test?

Most people in England are no longer advised to get tested so there should be very few situations in which this occurs. However, the government have advised the following:

- If a student/pupil is under 18 years old and tests positive for COVID-19 they should stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days from the start of their symptoms. After



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West Road Primary Academy, West Road, Moorends, Doncaster DN8 4LH

Telephone: 01405 812734

www.westroadprimary.co.uk admin@westrd.doncaster.sch.uk

this they should return to school if they are well enough to attend and **no longer have a high temperature.**

- Students/pupils should no longer carry out lateral flow tests to release from self-isolation.
- If a student is over 18 years old and tests positive for COVID-19 they should stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days from the start of their symptoms. After this they should return to school if they are well enough to attend and no longer have a high temperature. Students should no longer carry out lateral flow tests to release from self-isolation. **Students will be asked to provide evidence of a positive lateral flow test by recording it on the NHS site and sending a screenshot to their progress tutor, as previously.** Positive tests should be extremely rare as students are no longer advised to get tested and there is no expectation to do so even if they have symptoms or feel unwell.

Please be aware the emphasis is no longer on testing, but on whether a student/pupil feels well enough to attend school, provided that they do not have a high temperature.

Can students/pupils with COVID access remote learning?

If a student/pupil is too unwell to attend school they should not be accessing remote learning in the interests of their health and wellbeing. If a student/pupil is too unwell to attend school they should focus on rest and recovery and talk to their teachers about missed work when they are well enough to return to school. If there are regular absences and concerns about the amount of missed work, the school will invite you in to discuss these. Your child may need to attend additional classes after school, in some settings, if your child has missed too much work and is falling behind.

If a student/pupil has tested positive and we have seen evidence, but feels well enough to access remote learning, your school may **provide work which can be accessed remotely. This will be agreed with the school. However, this should** be extremely rare as students/pupils are no longer advised to get tested.

If a student/pupil has only mild illness and feels well enough to attend school they should do so provided that they do not have a high temperature, and they do not need to carry out a COVID test. Any access to remote learning is unlikely to be provided beyond the short term and will be kept under review, due to the significant reduction in self-isolation periods from the original 10 days and the new arrangements in place.

Should students wear face coverings?

For the moment, face coverings are no longer required in schools. Schools may however choose at certain times, during serious breakouts, to allow some students/pupils to wear face coverings on corridors and communal areas if they feel it is necessary. The government advises that they are useful in crowded and enclosed spaces where children may come into contact with people they do not normally meet.

Please note we discourage the use of face coverings in lessons in the interest of effective communication and learning.



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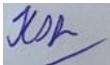
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Changes to the COVID arrangements are based on information from: • COVID-19 Response : Living with COVID (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid19-response-living-with-covid-19/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19>) • DfE Information email (31st March – Update to all education and childcare settings and providers) • SFCA 'Living with COVID update' • NHS website 'Changes to testing for coronavirus (COVID-19) in England' (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/get-tested-for-coronavirus/>)

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.



Kathy Thompson
Executive Headteacher

On behalf of the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust



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