



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Coast Road, Blackhall, Hartlepool, TS27 4HE

Tel: 0191 586 4308

Head Teacher: Mrs L Ashton
Chair of Governors: Mrs L Tulett



8th November 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

PARENTS INFORMATION REGARDING ADDITIONAL MEASURES IN SCHOOL

There has been a large increase in the number of children and young people in County Durham testing positive for COVID-19 and the highest case rates are in school age children. This is leading to spread of COVID-19 within families and into older age groups. The increase in COVID-19 cases in children is disrupting their education, affecting schools and has an impact on the wider community.

We have received recommendations from Durham County Council's Public Health team to introduce measures to mitigate the spread of infection. The following measures that were recommended are all currently in place:

- Staggering start and finish times
- Open days or events to take place virtually
- PCR testing for all adults and pupils if they are a close contact of a positive case in their household
- Additional attention will continue to be given to ventilation, cleaning and respiratory/hand hygiene

We have also decided to re-introduce the following measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in school:

- The use of face coverings in communal areas for all adults
- Visitors into school must be limited to those where it is necessary for children's education e.g. school nurse, speech therapist
- **Daily LFT testing at home for 7 days for any adult or pupil in key stage 2 (year 3) or above who is a household contact of a positive case and is exempt from isolation and continues to attend school.** The testing of primary age pupils is at parental discretion. Testing should start from the day the household member has symptoms or if they don't have symptoms from when they tested positive

At the moment, we will not be reintroducing 'bubbles' for each year group, but we will try to ensure that the mixing of classes is minimised.

We will continue to review any external educational visits but at the moment, these will go ahead as planned with strict risk assessments in place.

A lot of the Christmas events are still included in our calendar, and we will only cancel when it is clear we have no other alternative. I do hope that you understand that we are governed by advice from public health, alongside ensuring the safety of our pupils, staff and school community.

LFD Testing advice

We would recommend you have a supply of LFD testing kits at home in the event you are requested to use them. You can order home testing kits to be delivered to your home here www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests

Or you can collect LFD kits at Community Collect sites across the County. To find your nearest collection point please enter your post code here maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk

If you pick up tests from a pharmacy, you may be asked for a 'collect code' this helps the NHS match your details to the tests. To get a 'collect code' please visit test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/collect-lateral-flow-kits

Please register the result of your home test at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result

What to do if your child develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or tests positive for COVID-19

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

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

If your child does develop symptoms, they should get a PCR test and remain at home at least until the result is known. Book a free PCR test at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test . If positive, your child should isolate for 10 full days after their symptoms appeared.

If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, you can seek advice from NHS 111 at 111.nhs.uk/ or by phoning 111.

If your child has a positive test result but does not have symptoms they should stay at home and self-isolate for 10 full days from the date the positive test was taken. This isolation period will be extended if they go on to develop symptoms by counting 10 full days from the day following their symptom onset.

Help, support, and further information.

To help you comply with the requirement to self-isolate, the County Durham Together Community Hub can provide access to essential supplies, financial support and emotional support as well as other services. Please visit www.durham.gov.uk/covid19help or call the Community Hub on 03000 260260 for further details.

There is also support available the coronavirus section via durhamlocate.org.uk

Finally, we would like to thank you for continuing to work with us to keep our community safe during these difficult times.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Ashton
Headteacher