



St Joseph's R.C. Primary School
Coast Road, Blackhall, Hartlepool, TS27 4HE
Tel/Fax: 0191 586 4308
Head Teacher: Mrs L Ashton
Chair of Governors: Mr P Francis



Tuesday 11th January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thank you for your support and co-operation over the Autumn term, to keep everyone safe. We will continue to have strict measures in school to ensure that we can keep everyone as safe as possible over the coming weeks and months. These include:

- Regular handwashing routines
- Keep occupied spaces well ventilated
- Promote good respiratory hygiene using the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- Maintaining enhanced cleaning, including frequently cleaning surfaces and handles
- Regular staff testing
- Face coverings will be worn by staff and adults (including visitors) when moving around in corridors and communal areas. Health advice continues to be that children in primary schools should not be asked to wear face coverings.

From tomorrow, we would ask that all parents wear a mask when entering the school grounds.

Although we cannot create a totally risk free environment, we will continue to minimise risks as far as possible.

Bubbles

While classes will not be in Bubbles, we will limit movement around the school site and limit mixing where possible to phases. Class Bubbles will be introduced if cases in an individual class starts to rise.

If there is any disruption to class teaching through staff absence or local outbreaks in classes, school will inform you immediately and any necessary measures will be put in place.

Updated DfE Advice

Confirmatory PCR testing following a positive result on a lateral flow device (LFD) will be temporarily suspended from today, Tuesday 11 January. This means that for all education and childcare settings, staff and students who have tested and reported a positive LFD result will no longer be advised to get a confirmatory PCR test.

This change is informed by public health advice. With high COVID-19 rates, the risk of a positive LFD result being false is very small. We therefore don't need to ask people to do a confirmatory PCR unless they:

- have symptoms (in which case they need to follow the stay at home guidance, self-isolate and order a PCR test)
- wish to claim the Test and Trace Support Payment
- have been advised to take a PCR test because they are in a clinically vulnerable group

Respect, friendship, excellence, care

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- have been advised to do so as part of a research or surveillance programme

Education and childcare settings are not expected to trace contacts of a positive case as this will remain the responsibility of NHS Test and Trace. From today, Tuesday 11 January, contact tracing is triggered once a positive LFD test is reported.

Anyone with a positive LFD test result should self-isolate and follow self-isolation guidance.

It is very important to report all tests results (positive, negative and void) to NHS Test and Trace and their setting.

Isolation Period

It is now possible to end self-isolation after 7 days, following 2 negative LFD tests taken 24 hours apart. The first LFD test should not be taken before the sixth day.

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.

What to do if there is a case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in your household?

Daily LFT testing for 7 days for any adult or secondary age pupil or primary pupil aged 5yrs and older who is a household contact of a positive case and is exempt from isolation and continues to attend school. Testing should start from the day the household member has symptoms or if they don't have symptoms from when they tested positive*.

*Note: People who have tested positive with a PCR test within the last 90 days should not be encouraged to test unless they develop new symptoms

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

Illness

Please keep your child at home if they are unwell. We do acknowledge that at this time of year especially, there are many cold and flu-like bugs which are similar to covid-19. It is worth noting that recent information has shown that Omicron symptoms in children can present as:

- Fatigue
- Headache
- Tummy issues
- Runny nose and sore throat

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Breakfast Club/Tea Time Club

We will continue to run our breakfast and after school provision. For staffing reasons, it is very important that you book your child into the club using our booking system.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs L Ashton
Executive Headteacher