



## SCHOOL RESPONSE TO COVID-19 - UPDATE

22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

As this first term draws to a close, I would like to update you on our procedures for handling positive Covid-19 cases at school. We had our first positive case within the school community 2 weeks ago and since then we have been informed of a further 3 people testing positive. Fortunately for school, 2 of these people were not in the school environment when they developed symptoms or in the days leading up to developing symptoms. Therefore, no further action was taken. I'm sure you will join me in sending best wishes to those who have tested positive and wish them a speedy recovery.

I have had many queries about what we do and how the system works when we do receive a positive notification so I would like to explain what happens. **As you will see, it is absolutely critical that we have up-to-date contact details for you and there should be 2 or more contacts for each child.**

Before there is any confirmation of a positive case, all staff members or children with possible symptoms are asked to isolate until they receive a test result or for 10 days. Any child who displays symptoms, will be asked to wait in a designated room until they can be collected. This is thoroughly wiped down after each use.

### **When I receive notification of a positive covid test:**

I will do the following, immediately:

- Find out when earliest symptoms developed
- Work out when the child/adult was last in school
- Work out which children and adults would have been in contact with this person
- Phone Department for Education (DFE) dedicated hotline

### **Risk assessment of the specific case:**

When I speak to the DFE, I share all information about the case. If there is anything unknown or unclear, I will contact the individual/parent of the child who tested positive to gain the required information. If it is then possible to identify all 'close contacts', they alone will be asked to isolate. If the person testing positive has moved freely through the bubble, the whole bubble will be asked to isolate. This explains why a smaller group of children were asked to isolate this week.

The decision on who is asked to isolate is advised by the DFE based on the specific circumstances. The DFE records each case through an online register which I complete daily.

### **Communication:**

Communication of the positive case happens in this order:

1. Contact parents/carers of those asked to isolate. If it is in the evening, a text will be sent, if it is during the school day, each parent/carer will be phoned and asked to collect their child immediately. We will try all contacts in order until we are able to reach someone. A follow up text will be sent to ensure that everyone has received the message.
2. When children have been collected (or parents/carers informed if outside school hours), teachers will activate our home learning protocol. You received a letter about that today. Staff in the affected bubble will leave school to begin their isolation.



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3. The affected room(s) and surrounding area will be 'fogged' using a disinfecting machine which we have at school.
4. A letter with the dates of isolation is sent to the affected families.
5. A letter informing the wider school community of the positive case is sent to everyone else.
  
6. I inform the Chair of Governors.
7. I inform Public Health England (Lambeth office)
8. The area is closed and locked if possible then a deep clean of the affected area will take place the same evening.

This is a very challenging time for our school community and I understand that you need to be able to trust me and all the staff at school to look after your children and keep them safe. I am unable to provide full guarantees in the case of Covid but I do follow the regulations closely and I ensure that social distancing procedures are followed and that the bubbles are not allowed to mix.

#### **Frequently asked questions:**

##### **Should siblings of contacts also be asked to isolate?**

- The DFE guidance answer is no. Isolation of a bubble is a precaution against the possibility of the virus spreading further – it does not assume that everyone in the bubble is infectious.
- If the isolating child begins to show symptoms, then the whole family will need to isolate for 14 days or until a negative test is returned.

##### **If my child is isolating, I get them tested and it's negative, can they return to school?**

- I asked PHE this question directly, and this is the answer:

*anyone who is a close contact of a confirmed case needs to isolate for the full 14days. This is because it can take up to 14 days for someone to incubate and develop COVID after being exposed to the virus. So although a child has tested negative, they could still be incubating the virus and could later become infectious and develop COVID symptoms, up to 14 days after their contact with the infectious person*

##### **Who has tested positive? I need to know so that I can check if my child/family is at risk....**

- Please understand that I will protect the identity of anyone who tests positive. We carry out a full risk assessment of the case with the support of the DFE and I am extremely cautious.

At this difficult time, I will again ask for your trust. The whole staff team is working extremely hard to keep the school safe and we will continue to do so. I will share as much information as I can with you but there will be some details that I am unable to share with you in the interests of confidentiality.

I will be carrying out a full update of the school risk assessment over half term and the updated copy will be posted on the website during the week we come back.

Kind regards,

Sarah Wilson

Head Teacher



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