

14th May 2021

COVID UPDATE

Dear Families

The Prime Minister announced this week that step 3 of the Government's roadmap to ease the country out of lockdown, will be implemented as planned on the 17th May 2021. This is good news for us, all meaning that our lives can begin to return back to some normality.

This week schools and colleges also received updated guidance. The guidance states face coverings are no longer recommended for students in classes or communal areas and are no longer recommended for staff in classes. **Taking into consideration this guidance, the low rates in Hartlepool, the use of regular lateral flow tests and vaccination of the majority of staff, we feel it is safe enough to stop wearing face coverings in classes.** However, staff will continue to wear face coverings in corridors if 2-metre distancing can't be maintained. Visitors will still be required to wear a face covering when visiting the school/college. Public Health guidance also states that young people aged 11 and over must still wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated transport to school/college unless exempt.

In some classes, where teachers have been wearing masks to minimise risk to vulnerable children/young people, teachers will contact families this week to discuss these measures with you. If you haven't been contacted and wish to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to get in touch with your young person's teacher.

We will continue to implement our other control measures, to minimise risk, this means classes will remain in bubbles, continue with good hand and respiratory hygiene, regular cleaning and good ventilation.

Home Testing

We now have home testing kits for staff and students/young people to test themselves at home twice a week. Many parents have received these kits and have started to test their children/young people at home. A third of COVID cases come from asymptomatic people, therefore, these tests are vital in helping us stop the spread of the virus by identifying people who may have COVID and are displaying no symptoms.

If you would like your child/young person to take part in home testing and haven't already received kits, please contact your child/young person's teacher to arrange delivery.

If your child/young person has a positive result from a home test kit/lateral flow kit

If your child/young person tests positive using a home test kit, you **must** book a confirmatory PCR test. Please book online at www.gov.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119.

If your child/young person is symptomatic

If your child/young person displays any of the symptoms of COVID (temperature, cough, loss of taste or smell) do not use a LFT home kit to check if they have COVID. You must book a PCR test. Please book online at www.gov.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119.

Contact tracing over May/June half term holiday

We have been asked by the government to provide contact tracing information over the May half term holiday. Therefore, if your child/young person becomes positive with COVID, developing symptoms within 48 hours of being in school and college (up to 30th May), you must alert the school on **07519380454**. This is because they may have been infectious whilst in school/college and we will need to identify the close contacts. If your child/young person develops symptoms after the 30th May, please continue to report this on the NHS website and alert the school when we return on the 7th June.

Testing for parents, households and bubbles twice a week

Regular rapid testing is now also available for parents, their households and support or childcare bubbles. The government is encouraging all families to participate in twice weekly testing to help stop the spread. Parents and other adults in the household can access tests by:

- Ordering tests online www.gov.uk/order-school-household-tests
- Getting an assisted test at work, if it is available
- Attending a test site (Grayfields and Headland sites) to get tested or to pick up tests to do at home. Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff.

I will write to you again if any of the guidance in this letter changes.

Please can I once again, thank you for your continued support and thank families, students and staff for the hard work they have done so far to limit the spread of the virus.

Kindest Regards



Mrs L. Greig (CEO)