**St Brigid’s PS**

**Castle Street**

**Ballymoney**

**BT53 6JX**

**Principal: Mr Kieran O’Neill**

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**Thursday, 16 September 2021**

Dear Staff

**CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID-19 IN SCHOOL SETTING – INFORMATION FOR STAFF**

* **The PHA CTS (Contact Tracing Service) has taken over the role of contact tracing when a confirmed Covid case is linked to a school.**
* **The school will no longer ask class groups (pupils or staff) to leave school as has previously been the case.**
* **Information on any positive cases linked to the school should still be communicated as soon as possible and the school will send a text alert to parents whose children are associated with the bubble and staff of the positive Covid case. For Data Protection purposes no names or personal information will be shared.**
* **The text alert for staff will read:**

**‘COVID ALERT: A positive Covid case has been returned that is linked to your class. Please click on the link below to read the most up to date information for staff’.**

**(A link to a copy of this letter)**

* **On receiving this alert, you can be extra vigilant with regards to symptoms and contact the principal if you want any advice.**
* **The school will not be identifying close contacts.**
* Where a case of confirmed COVID-19 (Coronavirus) has been reported in a person with links to a school setting, all close contacts of the case who need to take specific actions with regard to testing and self-isolation will be identified, contacted and advised by the Public Health Agency (PHA) Contact Tracing Service.
* If you are contacted by PHA Contact Tracing Service, please follow the guidance that they provide to you.
* This advice will be linked to the up to date information in relation to self-isolation and testing. It will follow the flowchart model already available on the school website.
* Information on the latest self-isolation requirements can also be found on NI Direct (https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-self-isolating).
* **The advice on what to do if a close contact changed on 16th August 2021.**
* **If you aren’t contacted by the PHA CTS, then you haven’t been identified as a close contact. However, please remain vigilant for symptoms.**
* **If showing no symptoms and otherwise well, you should attend school as normal.**
* **If you haven’t been contacted and you are anxious or worried about Covid:**
  + **You can use Lateral Flow tests, if you have them, to check before deciding to book a PCR Test.**
  + **You can book a free PCR test on Day 2 and Day 8.**
  + **You can contact the school for advice and support if you need to.**

**What to do if you develop symptoms of 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)

Please book a free PCR test, **even if an earlier one was negative**. You should stay at home and self-isolate until you receive the result. Please see Coronavirus (COVID-19): self-isolating on nidirect for guidance on whether other people in your household also need to self-isolate while you are waiting for your PCR result.

Tests can be arranged at your closest testing site or by requesting a postal kit which will be sent to your home address. You can choose whichever option is more convenient for you. Going for a COVID test is one of the reasons you can leave home during the self-isolation period, however, they should not use public transport. Please order a postal test if you do not have private transport to a test site.

**How to stop COVID-19 spreading**

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19:

* **please get vaccinated if you are eligible and haven’t already done so**
* wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
* use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
* wash your hands as soon as you get home
* cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
* put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

All the key measures, protocols and risk mitigations listed above and others are already in place in school and will continue to be.

**Further information**

* For further information, please see the NI Direct website Coronavirus (COVID-19): self-isolating | nidirect the Public Health Agency website https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus
* or contact NHS 111.
* If your child feels unwell and you are worried about their symptoms or about anyone else in the home, please contact your GP.

**If you have any concerns, questions or worries please come and speak to me.**

Mr O’Neill

**DE COVID Update – PHA/Contact Tracing**

Checklist for all staff

**If you develop symptoms:**

* STAY AT HOME
* BOOK A PCR TEST
* CONTINUE TO SELF-ISOLATE UNTIL RESULT OF TEST IS KNOWN

**If PCR test is positive:**

* SELF-ISOLATE FOR 10 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THE TEST
* INFORM THE SCHOOL
* PHA WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH YOU RE. CONTACT TRACING

**If PCR test is negative:**

* PROVIDED YOU ARE WELL ENOUGH YOU CAN RETURN TO WORK

**If you are identified as a close contact by PHA:**

* PLEASE FOLLOW ALL ADVICE GIVEN BY PHA
* PLEASE NOTIFY THE SCHOOL IF ANY ABSENCE WILL BE REQUIRED FURTHER TO PHA ADVICE

**If you haven’t been contacted by the PHA:**

* YOU HAVE NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A CLOSE CONTACT
* PROVIDED YOU ARE WELL ENOUGH YOU CONTINUE TO WORK
* PLEASE FOLOW ALL PROTOCOLS AND RISK MITIGATIONS WE HAVE IN PLACE

(see next page)

**If the school is notified by a parent of a pupil or by a member of staff of a positive covid case:**

* A ‘COVID ALERT’ TEXT WILL BE ISSSUED
* THE PHA WILL CONTACT PARENTS/STAFF DIRECTLY RE. CONTACT TRACING
* PHA WILL GIVE IDENTIFIED CLOSE CONTACTS ADVICE WITH NEXT STEPS TO TAKE
* THE PHA MAY CONTACT THE SCHOOL FOR ASSISTANCE FOR HELP WITH CONTACT TRACING
* THE SCHOOL WILL NOT AUTOMATICALLY
  + - Send children or staff home
    - Ask for Day 2 and Day 8 PCR tests to take place

**St Brigid’s PS Close Contacts, Protocols and Risk Mitigation**

**If you have not been contacted by the PHS CTS, are fully vaccinated, have no symptoms and can continue to work please read the information below carefully and follow the measures as best you can to protect yourself and others.**

* All protocols with regards to hygiene and social distancing to be observed.
* If you are identified as a close contact by the PHA, please follow their advice and notify the school.
* If PHA advice is that you can continue to come to work and you are well enough to do so, please continue to follow all the protocols and risk mitigations set out below:
* **Minimise your contact with other members of staff, especially those who may be in any vulnerable category, especially for the 10 day period after receipt of the school Covid alert text.**
* It is strongly recommended that you wear your mask when working with others.
* Regularly wash your hands throughout the day.
* **If moving around the school and into other rooms – please maintain 2m social distance from all other adults.**
* There should be no physical contact or less than 2m contact.
* Anti-bacterial spray is available in all communal areas – please continue to sanitise areas visited.
* If you develop any Covid symptoms – self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test. When the result is available please refer to the flow chart on the school website or contact the Principal for advice.
* Regular cleaning daily will continue.
* All classrooms have windows that can be opened to allow for decent ventilation.
* Please continue to use the regular Lateral Flow System of asymptomatic testing on a Sunday and Wednesday.
* The Lateral Flow Tests can also be used at any time to check during the week.
* Lateral Flow Asymptomatic Testing can give an indication but is not a substitute for a PCR Test.
* The Department of Health has stressed that the vaccination programme is available to all members of staff.