**St Brigid’s PS**

**Castle Street**

**Ballymoney**

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**Thursday, 16 September 2021**

Dear Parents/Guardians

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

* **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 will read:**

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

* **On receiving this alert, you can be extra vigilant with regards to symptoms and contact the school 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 your child develops 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**. Your child 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 child’s 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 your child 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.

Thank you

Mr O’Neill