

29 April 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Public Health at Warwickshire County Council, working alongside the Education Department, are leading on the management of COVID-19 cases in settings. We have had a sudden number of Lateral Flow Device (LFD) positive cases at Higham Lane School. These have had unusual distribution across the school and as such we are requesting the following additional actions.

As Year 11 and Year 13 are undertaking assessments in the coming days and weeks which will contribute towards their final GCSE and A-level grades, we expect all families to follow these actions to prevent further disruption to school and to support these children to remain in school for these vital assessments.

Actions are:

Years 7,9,10 and 11: will need to **LFD test daily** – including today (Thursday 29th April) until Tuesday morning (4th May). If these tests are negative and your child has not been asked to self isolate as a close contact, then your child can return to school on Tuesday 4th May (please see below on where to get your LFDs).

Year 8: Due to having a few cases in Year 8 – **we request all Year 8 to self isolate for 10 days up to and including Friday 7th May**– returning to usual activity on 8th May. **This means that Year 8 will be able to return to school on Monday 10th May.**

We recommend all Year 8 to test by PCR in the coming days. This is a more sensitive test than LFDs and may identify more children. If this PCR is negative, the child will still need to self isolate until the end of the isolation period, but it may give families more information on whether their child does or does not have the virus. Please apply here: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

Anyone isolating as a close contact can also attend for a PCR if they wish to receive the more sensitive test. Please apply here: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

All families with a child isolating at home should please support the reduction in community transmission; we advise household members to undertake rapid/ LFD testing twice weekly (minimum once a week).

Year 12/13 – no actions are required currently, but these students should please be aware of the advice around general prevention principles. They can return to school on Tuesday 4th May.

Where to access at-Home rapid Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests.

These can be collected locally from:

- Student Services at Higham Lane School on Friday, 30th April at the times below:

Year 7: 8am-9am

Year 8: 9am-10am

Year 9: 10am-11am

Year 10: 11am-12pm

Year 11: 12pm-1pm

Year 12-13: 1pm-2pm

Parents/carers who have children in more than one year group only need to visit once and will be able to collect kits for each of their children.

- PCR walk in centres (from 1-8pm daily) - you can find your nearest collection site here: <https://find-covid-19-rapid-test-sites.maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk> (please check times at your local site)

If the walk-in centres are not close to you, you can have LFD tests delivered to your home by Royal Mail, usually within 24hrs. These can be found from this website. <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

All results from at-home LFD tests require registering online and any positive results require a confirmatory PCR test within 72 hrs of the test.

If you are planning on using a walk-in test centre for your confirmatory PCR test – please note these now close for appointments at 1pm (last test 12.30pm). Please book your PCR test as soon as you have a positive LFD. You can book PCR tests via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by ringing 119

Note: Those that have tested positive for Coronavirus by PCR are exempt from a further PCR or LFT/D test for 90 days, unless they develop new symptoms, or have otherwise been exposed and advised to do so

It is crucial, that in addition to the regular testing with rapid LFD, that anyone with COVID-19 symptoms accesses a PCR test via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by ringing 119. If you are unwell with a new continuous cough, high temperature or a loss or change in taste or smell, you and your household must self-isolate for 10 days from the date of first symptoms, unless there is a negative PCR test result. Please also do the same if you have the milder symptoms of: sore throat, severe fatigue/ feeling unwell for no clear reason, poorly tummy, headache and muscle aches.

When you or your child are self-isolating as a close contact of a case

- We know that when isolating as a close contact, some close contacts may become positive for COVID-19 without showing any symptoms and are unaware they have the virus. In addition, this can pass onto household members who may become unwell or not show any symptoms. **We advise all family members to rapid LFD test with home test kits when a member of the household is self isolating to reduce the likelihood of cases.** This is above the national guidance for community testing, and as such will include all children in the household. These tests can pick up some cases without symptoms in the household (order them as above). They should be used twice a week (3-5 days apart) and can be reordered daily. Day three and day eight of your isolation are ideal days to test. If you haven't been able to test during isolation, then testing on the day after isolation (day 11) before they return to the setting would be ideal.

Be aware of COVID in your home.

- Please note, that while COVID-19 usually presents with a new continuous cough, high temperature and loss or change in taste or smell, COVID-19 can present with other symptoms such as: sore throat, severe fatigue/feeling unwell for no clear reason, poorly tummy, headache and muscle aches. Looking out for these less common symptoms is especially important for those with a child/ren self isolating - if your child or even members of your household become unwell in the isolation period, although it may be a seasonal cold, please consider this could be COVID-19.
- You/your child can PCR test whilst they are isolating and should test if they have symptoms. Those self-isolating should not attend community Lateral Flow Test (LFD) centres. PCR tests (not LFD tests) should be used for people who have symptoms as these are the most accurate test. You can book a PCR test online at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by ringing 119. When booking online, you can tick the box that states "Public Health/ Local authority has requested you book a test". You **are** permitted to have a test with lesser symptoms, but the household legally do not need to isolate at that stage, unless anyone has a cough, temperature, loss or change in taste or sense of smell.
- When someone in the household has COVID-19, wherever possible, avoid using shared spaces such as kitchens and other living areas while others are present and take your meals back to your room to eat. Wear a face covering when spending time in shared areas inside your home. Increase cleaning of things and surfaces people touch, do not share towels, use hand sanitiser and ensure that handles of cups, trays, and cutlery/crockery are cleaned appropriately between uses.



What to do if your child is unwell?

As cases are much lower in the community, we will expect to see fewer cases in the setting and anyone unwell are more likely to have seasonal colds. COVID-19 can present with other symptoms such as: sore throat, severe fatigue/feeling unwell for no clear reason, poorly tummy, headache and muscle aches. Before COVID we would ask unwell children to remain at home until they are feeling better as we wouldn't want to have nasty colds going around the setting.

If there are high numbers of cases in the setting or community then we would ask that a child who is unwell tests for COVID by PCR as this is the more accurate for children with symptoms; results take a day on average. However, as a minimum we would expect children to rapid home LFD test based on symptoms. Those with a high temperature, new consistent cough, loss or change in sense of smell must PCR test based on national guidance.

Thank you for your support with the above recommendations, designed to support and maintain education provision for your child(ren), and to keep you, your families, your setting, and your local community safe.

Kindest regards

Liann Brookes-Smith

Public Health Warwickshire County Council