

Tuesday 5th April 2022

Dear STAR MAT Community – parents, carers, staff and students,

Update on Covid Guidance

As you may be aware, from 1st April 2022, the Government has changed its guidance in relation to Coronavirus. *This letter intends to briefly outline those changes so that you have the information in one place.*

Specifically, the guidance states:

- Free COVID-19 tests are no longer available, other than for specific groups including NHS staff and eligible patients
- Adults with the symptoms of a respiratory infection, and who have a high temperature or feel unwell, should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people until they feel well enough to resume normal activities and they no longer have a high temperature
- Adults with a positive COVID-19 test result should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days, which is when they are most infectious
- Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people. They can go back to school, college or childcare when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough to attend
- For children and young people aged 18 and under who have a positive COVID-19 test result, they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days, which is when they are most infectious
- Education and childcare settings are no longer able to order test kits; settings have now ceased twice weekly testing though may be advised by local health protection teams to reintroduce tests as an “exceptional measure, for targeted groups of staff and pupils or students...in the event of a possible COVID-19 outbreak”
- Surplus test kits should not be given to staff, pupils or students unless advised by a local health protection team or local authority

As a Trust we continue to maintain all available control measures with regular hand washing and sanitising encouraged alongside general good hygiene. Our school cleaning regime is maintained and should any outbreak in cases occur, then we would look to deploy additional resources. We continue also to ensure ventilation and air flow is maximised to all classrooms and work areas.

How can you help?

There have been many changes to the guidance. Please do take the time to familiarise yourself with the above. Current COVID-19 symptom guidance for children is available here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/coronavirus-in-children/> and states:

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- a high temperature or shivering (chills) – a high temperature means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
- shortness of breath
- feeling tired or exhausted

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- an aching body
- a headache
- a sore throat
- a blocked or runny nose
- loss of appetite
- diarrhoea
- feeling sick or being sick

The symptoms are very similar to symptoms of other illnesses, such as colds and flu.

Your child should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have symptoms of COVID-19 and they either:

- have a high temperature
- do not feel well enough to go to school, college or childcare, or do their normal activities

They can go back to school, college or childcare when they feel better or do not have a high temperature.

If your child has mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat or mild cough, and they feel well enough, they can go to school, college or childcare.

Hopefully the combination of summer weather alongside vaccination roll-out including for our younger pupils will see a sustained reduction in case numbers and illness levels across our Trust. Thank you to everyone for your continued partnership working over what has been at times and in some settings an extremely challenging term – but in spite of this we have managed, TOGETHER, to maintain on-site education at every school and hopefully can optimistically enter into the Summer Term..

Wishing you all a Happy Easter when it comes.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Yapp

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