



## PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parent / Carer,

FOR PARENTS INFORMATION REGARDING THE NEWOMICRON VARIANT OF COVID-19 AND ADDITIONAL MEASURES IN SCHOOL

Dear Parents and Carers,

We appreciate that you will already be aware that some national measures have been reintroduced in response to the emergence of a new COVID-19 variant, which is called Omicron.

All individuals who have been identified as a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, irrespective of vaccination status and age, will be contacted directly and required to self-isolate immediately and asked to book a PCR test.

There are still high numbers of children and young people in County Durham testing positive for COVID-19 and the highest case rates are in school age children. This is leading to spread of COVID-19 within families and into older age groups.

The increase in COVID-19 cases in children is disrupting their education, affecting schools and has an impact on the wider community.

We have received recommendations from the Government and Durham County Council's Public Health team and have decided to re-introduce the following measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in school (Note some of these measures were put in place at the start of November 21):

- **The use of face coverings** in school for visiting adults
- Staggering **start times as we had last year**
  - If your surname starts A to D arrive at 8:45
  - If your surname starts E to N arrive at 8:50
  - If your surname starts O to Z arrive at 8:55
- To carefully consider COVID risks before planning new **educational visits and residential trips**
- **Parents evenings** to move to a virtual format such as telephone calls
- **PCR testing** for all adults and pupils if they are a close contact of a positive case in their household\*.
- **Daily LFT testing** at home for 7 days for any adult or pupil in key stage 2 (year 3 or above) who is a household contact of a positive case and is exempt from isolation and continues to attend school. The testing of primary age pupils is at parental





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discretion. Testing should start from the day the household member has symptoms or if they don't have symptoms from when they tested positive\*

- Additional attention will be given to **ventilation, cleaning and respiratory and hand hygiene**
- In addition we have been asked to consider the cancelation or postponement of **whole school events** e.g. assemblies

*\*Note: People who have tested positive with a PCR test within the last 90 days should not be encouraged to test unless they develop new symptoms*

Please be reassured that for most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

At this stage we have had few COVID cases in school and our whole school assemblies happen only twice each week. These whole school assemblies have fewer children in them than year group bubbles in secondary schools.

We intend to continue with twice weekly assemblies but will review this if case rates rise in the local area.

Similarly, we are still planning on holding our nativity plays and end of term carol service. We are restricting numbers attending and will be asking that all attendees take a lateral flow test (see below) on the day of the nativity they are attending, and only to come if the test is negative.

Again, we will keep this under review in the next two weeks. I hope that we will not have to cancel, but if we do, the plays will be filmed for you to watch.

As ever it is up to each person in our school community to ensure that this new mutation does not spread. Good hand and respiratory hygiene, social distancing and face mask wearing will go a long way to suppress the spread of COVID and ensure that we can have some level of normality this Christmas.

### LFD Testing advice

We would recommend you have a supply of LFD testing kits at home in the event you are requested to use them. You can order home testing kits to be delivered to your home here [www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests](https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests)

Or you can collect LFD kits at Community Collect sites across the County. To find your nearest collection point please enter your post code here [maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk](https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk)

If you pick up tests from a pharmacy, you may be asked for a 'collect code' this helps the NHS match your details to the tests. To get a 'collect code' please visit [test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/collect-lateral-flow-kits](https://test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/collect-lateral-flow-kits)





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Please register the result of your home test at [www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result](http://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result)

### What to do if your child develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or tests positive for 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)

If your child does develop symptoms, they should get a PCR test and remain at home at least until the result is known. Book a free PCR test at [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) . If positive, your child should isolate for 10 full days after their symptoms appeared.

If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, you can seek advice from NHS 111 at [111.nhs.uk/](http://111.nhs.uk/) or by phoning 111.

If your child has a positive test result but does not have symptoms they should stay at home and self-isolate for 10 full days from the date the positive test was taken. This isolation period will be extended if they go on to develop symptoms by counting 10 full days from the day following their symptom onset.

You must always register the result of your home test at [www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result](http://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result)

### Help, support, and further information.

To help you comply with the requirement to self-isolate, the County Durham Together Community Hub can provide access to essential supplies, financial support and emotional support as well as other services. Please visit [www.durham.gov.uk/covid19help](http://www.durham.gov.uk/covid19help) or call the Community Hub on 03000 260260 for further details.

There is also support available the coronavirus section via [durhamlocate.org.uk](http://durhamlocate.org.uk)

Finally, we would like to thank you for everything you've done to keep your family and community safe, and for your patience in continuing to support our school during this challenging time.

Kind Regards ,  
Mark Turner



