



Coronavirus Guide for schools in the NHS Grampian area
August 2020

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Purpose of this document

Joint working between public health, schools and local authorities is imperative for a quick response to any cases of COVID-19 in educational settings. This guide provides information which may help schools, and head teachers in particular, anticipate what is expected and how you will be supported.

Information on COVID-19

What is coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?

The disease COVID-19 is caused by a new strain of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that was first identified in Wuhan City, China in December 2019. COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation on 12 March 2020.

What are the typical signs and symptoms of COVID-19?

The most common symptoms are:

- new continuous cough and/or
- fever/high temperature and/or
- loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste.

For most people the symptoms of COVID-19 will be mild. Some people, however, will have more serious symptoms, including pneumonia or difficulty breathing, which might require admission to hospital.

How is coronavirus spread?

There are two routes by which COVID-19 can be spread:

- Directly: from close contact with an infected person (within 2 metres) where respiratory secretions can enter the eyes, mouth, nose or airways. This risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.
- Indirectly: by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching own mouth, nose or eyes. Under most circumstances, the amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surfaces is likely to have decreased significantly by 72 hours.

It is understood that people may pass on COVID-19 in the 48 hours before they start to develop symptoms, and up to 10 days after the symptoms start. Where there are no symptoms contact tracing uses the date of the test instead, i.e. contacts 2 days before the date of test until 10 days after.

How can spread be prevented?

A range of public health measures are used in non-health care settings to try and control transmission of SARS-CoV-2. These include physical distancing, regular hand washing and face coverings, and increased environmental cleaning. As part of the gradual relaxation of lockdown measures the Test and Protect programme, which includes contact tracing, is being implemented to allow identification of close contacts of confirmed cases, self-isolation, a sustained reduction in new cases through the prevention of further transmission.

Staff, parents, visitors or children **should not** go to school if they:

- have developed COVID-19 symptoms or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or
- are from the same household as someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or
- have returned from a country not-exempt from self-isolation requirements
- have been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

For the purposes of assessing close contacts within a school setting, a close contact would be defined as a person who, in the period 48 hours prior to and 10 days after the confirmed case's symptom onset, or date a positive test was taken if asymptomatic, had at least one of the following types of exposure:

- face to face contact with a case within 1 metre for any length of time, including:
 - being coughed on
 - having a face-to-face conversation
 - having skin-to-skin physical contact
- any contact within 1 metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact

Those who briefly passed the case in a corridor do not meet the criteria and would not be considered a close contact.

The local Health Protection Team will be notified of any positive case in complex settings (e.g. schools, nurseries) and will be in touch to offer support and advice to the establishment.

When to call the Health Protection Team

Schools should inform the Health Protection Team (HPT) of:

- all confirmed cases of COVID-19 notified to the school
- any suspicion of a cluster in the school of either suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19
- an increase in the background rate of absence due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 (this does not include absence rate due to individuals self-isolating as contacts of cases).
- a general increase in respiratory illness in the school – whilst this may be due to other infections such as influenza - schools should be alert to the possibility this could be due to COVID-19.
- Any concerns or questions they may have.

Schools **do not** need to inform HPT of single suspected cases (where one person has symptoms of COVID-19 but not confirmed by testing). However, Head Teachers or business managers should make themselves aware of the reporting and notification process to their local authority education leads.

Health Protection contact details

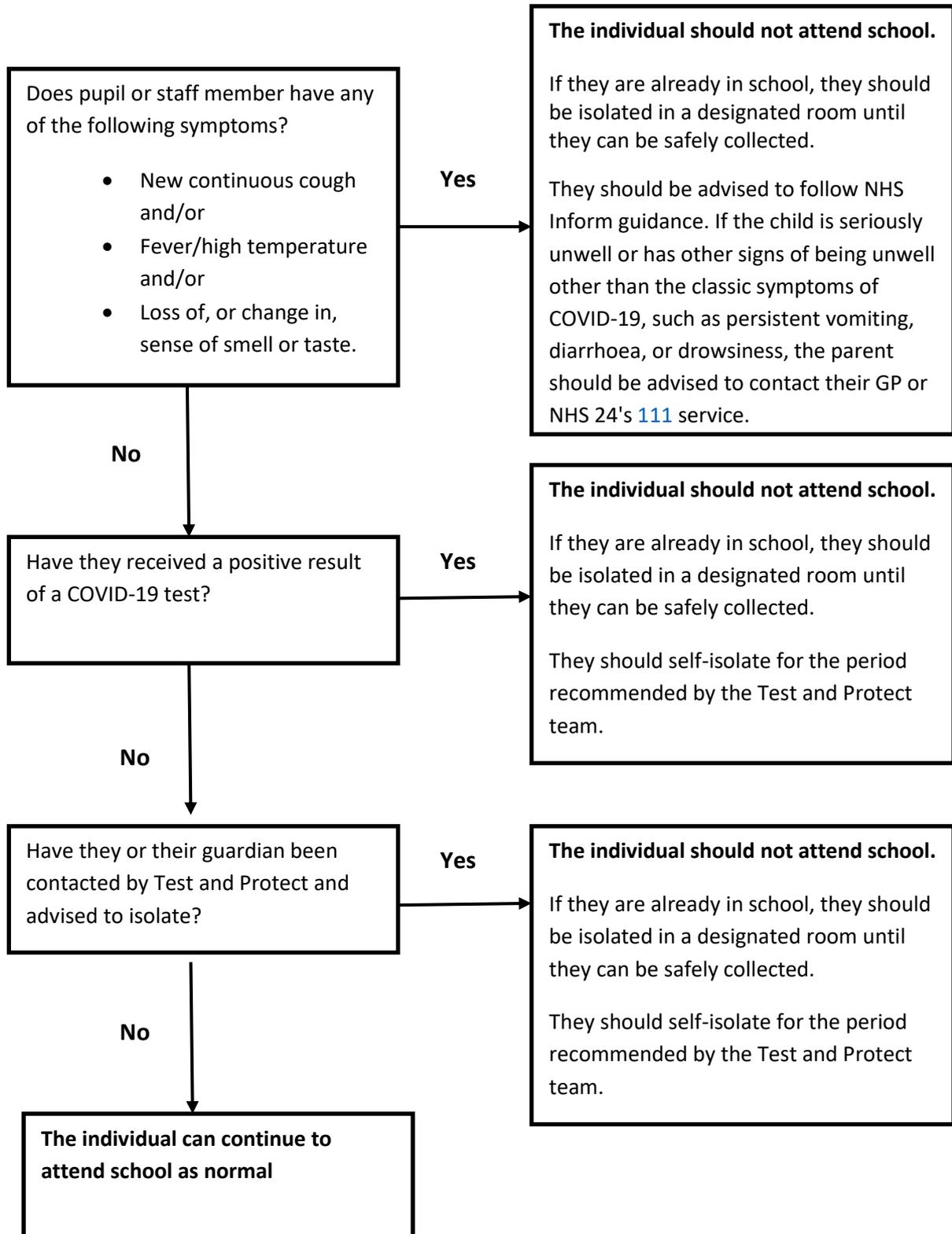
Office hours phone number: 01224 558 520

Out of hours phone number: 0345 456 6000 (NHS Grampian switchboard)
Ask for Public Health on Call

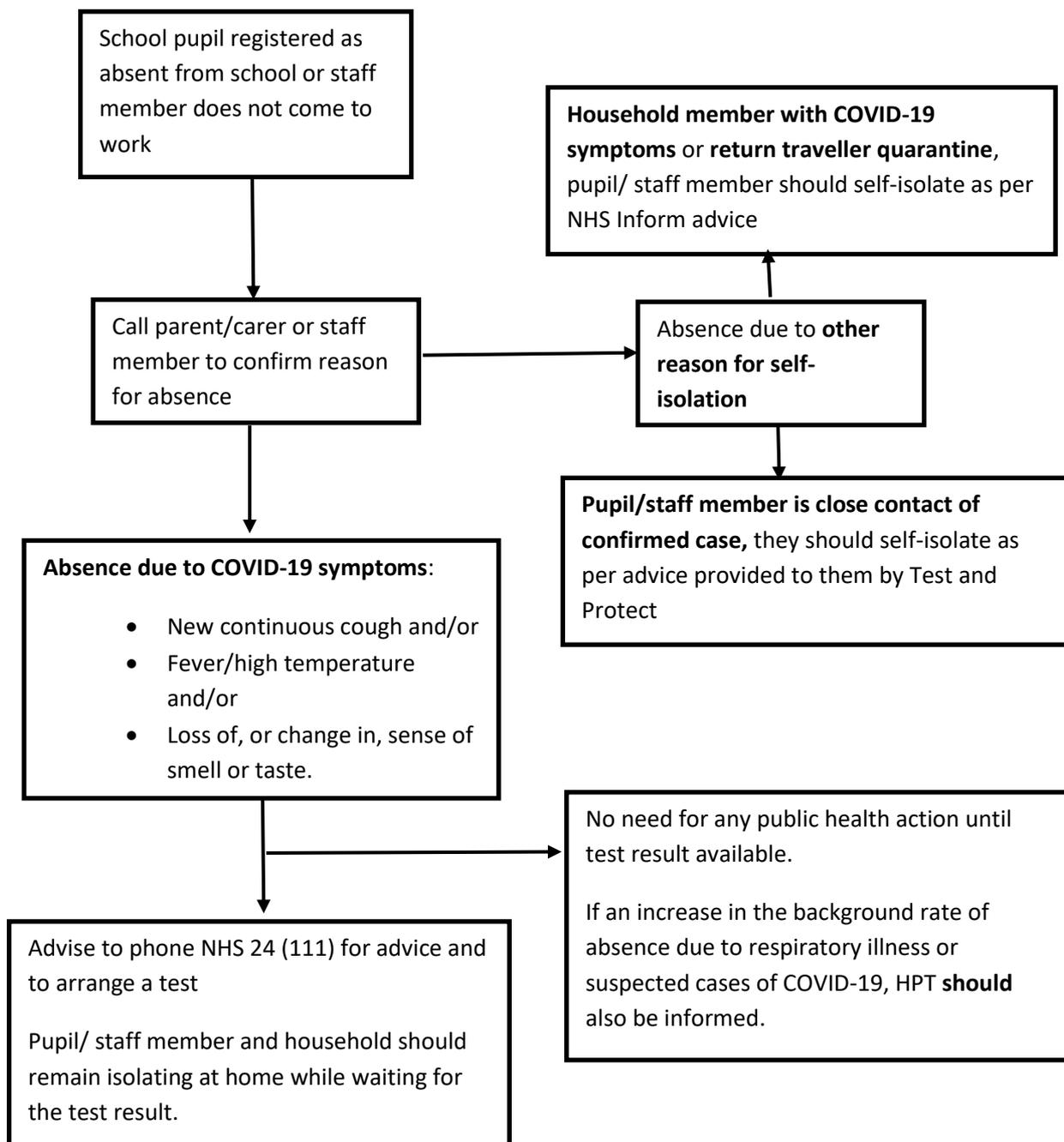
Email: gram.healthprotection@nhs.scot

Required actions if...

Scenario A: A pupil or staff member is in school with symptoms of COVID-19 or against the advice of the Test and Protect team



Scenario B: A pupil or staff member does not attend school/reports an absence



- Anybody with new continuous cough, fever and/or change in sense of smell/taste who subsequently has a negative COVID-19 test can only return to school when they feel well, have had no fever for 48 hours without having to use paracetamol, and any other household members with symptoms have also received a negative test result.
- Anybody who has been advised to self-isolate by the NHS Test and Protect team must complete their isolation period regardless of any subsequent testing. The school will be informed when this is the case for a pupil.
- In the event that a person with symptoms declines to arrange a test, they must remain isolated for 10 days from the start of their symptoms and the rest of their household should isolate for 14 days.
- Child/ young person unwell with other respiratory symptoms (e.g. runny nose, sore throat, sneezing) or diarrhoea. Then: Follow usual policy for sickness at school (stay home until well enough and free of diarrhoea for 48hrs) and ensure good hand & respiratory hygiene – see Appendix 2 '*Symptoms and Actions*'
- Cleaning should be carried out according to school protocol – a document compiled by NHS Grampian's Health Protection Team regarding cleaning advice will be available shortly

What to do if there is a positive case of COVID-19 reported to the school

Immediate steps

The Test and Protect contact tracing team will be in touch with the case (or case's parent/guardian) to identify any potential close contacts. The preliminary investigation by Test and Protect will identify that a school is involved. This will then lead to notification of the Health Protection Team who will undertake the relevant investigation.

It is possible that the school may be the first organisation to be made aware of a new case of COVID19, either directly from the case (the person who tested positive) or from their parent or guardian. Schools are asked to maintain the confidentiality of the case where possible. If the school becomes aware of a confirmed case or cluster of cases of COVID-19 in associated with the school, they should contact the Health Protection Team for further advice before taking any public health action.

The Problem Assessment Group (PAG) or Incident Management Team (IMT)

If the case is confirmed, a Problem Assessment Group (PAG) or Incident Management Team meeting (IMT) may be convened by the HPT to assess risk and agree actions. A PAG is usually called when there is no immediate evidence of transmission within the school. If there are concerns about transmission within the school an Incident Management Team (IMT) meeting may be called. The decision on the type of risk assessment meeting required sits with Public Health and a PAG can be followed immediately by an IMT if there is sufficient evidence of risk.

What to expect

- The meeting will take place using Microsoft Teams.
- The Head Teacher will be asked to gather information in preparation for the meeting including details of timetables and seating plans. Public Health will help clarify the information to be gathered in advance of the meeting.

- The meeting will be Chaired by Public Health and will involve the Head Teacher, Chief Education Officer (or delegate) and Environmental Health. Additional colleagues may be involved as necessary.

The purpose of the meeting

The purpose is to review the situation, assess risk and identify any resulting actions for any of the parties present. Actions will be agreed including any staff or pupils that require to self-isolate.

The key elements of a PAG are:

1. Identifying which pupils, staff and visitors were in contact with the case:

Public Health will ask you to produce a list of individuals who may be a contact based on the criteria for a close contact in the box below. This will include all school activities including transport to school and breaks and lunchtime periods. The layout of classrooms and measurement of distance may be required.

2. Assessing whether there is evidence of transmission of COVID19 within the school:

Public Health will ask you to review the register of absences for confirmed cases of COVID19 in the last 14 days or recent suspected cases, or any unusual absences/absence rates. Where these exist, there will be consideration of what their relationship is to the current case.

3. Reviewing physical distancing and infection control within the school.

The Head Teacher will be asked to describe measures in place to promote physical distancing and prevent the spread of infection.

4. Agreed actions will be summarised.

Actions following on from the PAG or IMT

All potential actions will not be covered here but the most likely next steps, how you can support these, and how you will be supported are outlined below:

- You will be asked to forward a list of all those agreed to be contacts of the case to Public Health. All contacts will be contacted by the Test & Protect team. To assist this, we would ask that the list of contacts is provided as an Excel spreadsheet.
- A letter will be sent to parents highlighting that contact tracing is taking place in the school.
- NHS Grampian and your local authority will co-ordinate wider communications, e.g. a press statement and social media.

More information

Where to access help

- Testing is available online through www.nhsinform.scot or by calling 0800 028 2816.
- If a pupil or staff member is unwell, advise them to phone NHS 24 (111) and stay at home.
- If a pupil or staff member is looking for more information on COVID-19, you can direct them to the NHS Inform website.

Other sources of information

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-preparing-start-new-school-term-august-2020/>

COVID-19 – guidance for non-healthcare settings

<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): getting tested in Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested/pages/arrange-a-test/>

Appendix 1: Template letters for parents

A. Good practice in schools

Dear parents/carers,

After a difficult time for all we are pleased to have children and young people back at school. Schools are closely following guidance to try to stay open, safe and COVID free. However, we all have a responsibility to ensure children, young people and staff remain safe and in school.

These are things that you, as parents and carers, can do to help:

When dropping off or picking up children

- Please stay 2 metres away from other families/households. Close contact and large groups help spread coronavirus and could lead to an outbreak in school.
- To help stop crowding at the school gates, only one adult per family/household should be dropping off or picking up children.
- If your child can walk safely to and from school without an adult, or be dropped off and met at a safe distance from school, please let them. This will make physical distancing easier for those who have to accompany their child.

When talking with your child or young person about coronavirus

- Please talk to your child about regular hand washing, covering their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow, and physical distancing (for older young people, and adults). See NHS Inform for a reminder of how to keep yourself and your family safe.
- Older young people might need reminded to physically distance, especially when outside their class, year group or 'bubble'.
- From the 31st August, all pupils over 12 years old are required to wear a face covering in corridors, communal areas and on school buses. When not in school, children and young people should wear face coverings when they are in enclosed public places.
- Places where young people need reminded to physically distance include play parks, shops and parties. House parties have been linked to outbreaks and are strongly discouraged.

If you have been on holiday, or if anyone in the household has symptoms

- Please don't send your child to school with symptoms which may be coronavirus, no matter how mild (a new persistent cough, and/or a high temperature, and/or a loss or change in taste or smell).
- If your child or anyone in your household has symptoms you should ALL stay at home. Find out how to organise a COVID test on NHS Inform or phone 0800 028 2816. If your child has symptoms but tests negative, they can return to school once they have had no symptoms for 48 hours, are feeling better and anyone else in the household with symptoms returns a negative test.
- If you return from an area with quarantine restrictions keep your child off school and stay at home for 14 days. A negative COVID test will not shorten quarantine as it doesn't show if you or your child will develop the virus. Updated travel information is on gov.scot

Thank you. By working together, we can help keep our schools open and safe.

B. Single case in school

Advice to All Parents - Single case

Dear Parents,

We have been advised by the NHS Grampian Health Protection Team (HPT) that there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 linked with the school.

We know that you may find this concerning, but we are continuing to monitor the situation and are working closely with colleagues in public health. This letter is to inform you of the current situation and provide advice on how to support your child. Please be reassured that for most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

The small number of children who have been in direct contact with the confirmed case have been contacted by the Test and Protect service and they will be self-isolating for 14 days.

The school remains open/ will reopen on... and your child should continue to attend if they remain well and have not already been advised by Test and Protect to self-isolate.

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must not come to school. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for testing and further information on testing can be found on [NHS Inform](#). They should begin 10 days of self-isolation whilst waiting for test results.

All other household members who remain well must stay at home and begin 14 days of self-isolation. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill. Household members should not go to work, school, public areas or use public transport. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-protect/pages/who-needs-to-self-isolate/> Household members staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.

If your child's result is negative, they can return to school when they feel well and have had no fever for 48 hours (without needing paracetamol.) The household isolation can be lifted.

If your child's result is positive, you will be contacted by Test and Protect and advised accordingly.

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

If your child or anyone in the household does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from [NHS Inform](#).

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

Do

- 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

Further Information

Further information is available at:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

C. Outbreak in a School

Advice to Parents

Dear Parents,

Over the last **xxx** weeks we have been made aware of several members of our school community who have tested positive for COVID 19.

We know that you will find this concerning and we are continuing to monitor the situation and are working closely with the NHS Grampian Health Protection Team (HPT). This letter is to inform you of the current situation and provide advice on how to support your child. Please be reassured that for most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

The children who have been in direct contact with the confirmed cases have been contacted by the Test and Protect service and will be self-isolating for 14 days.

[The school remains open and your child should continue to attend if they are well and have not been advised to self-isolate by Test and Protect or the Health Protection Team.]

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must not come to school. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for testing and further information on testing can be found on [NHS Inform](#). They should begin 10 days of self-isolation whilst waiting for test results.

All other household members who remain well must stay at home and begin 14 days of self-isolation. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill. Household members should not go to work, school, public areas or use public transport. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-protect/pages/who-needs-to-self-isolate/> Household members staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.

If your child's result is negative, they can return to school when they feel well and have had no fever for 48 hours (without needing paracetamol.) The household isolation can be lifted. If your child's result is positive, you will be contacted by Test and Protect and advised accordingly.

Symptoms of COVID 19

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature
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For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

If your child does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from [NHS Inform](#).

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

Do

- 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

Further Information

Further information is available at:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 2: Symptoms and Actions

Who has symptoms	What symptoms	Actions	If result negative	If result positive
Adults or children	Fever ($\geq 37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$), new continuous cough, and/or a loss of taste/smell	<p>Symptomatic person to seek covid testing and to enter 10 days isolation while awaiting result</p> <p>Household member(s) enter 14 days isolation while awaiting result</p>	<p>Stay off work or school until better including no fever for 48 hours</p> <p>Household isolation lifted</p>	<p>Complete 10 days isolation and await call from contact tracer</p> <p>Complete 14 days household isolation</p>
	Chills, sore throat, headache, runny nose, shortness of breath, general weakness, muscle pain, diarrhoea	<p>Symptomatic person to stay off work or school until better including no diarrhoea for 48 hours.</p> <p>No covid testing.</p> <p>No household isolation.</p>		
<p>https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/test-and-protect/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-infection</p>				