The Topsham School

A love of learning and commitment to the success of every child at the heart of all we do

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Advice to All Parents - warn and inform

Dear Parents,

We have been advised by Public Health England that there have been 8 confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the school. At present, confirmed cases are across the school.

We know that you may find this concerning but we are continuing to monitor the situation and are working closely with Public Health England. 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 school setting remains open and your child should continue to attend as normal if they remain well. We encourage household members that are aged 11 and over to continue with twice weekly LFD testing to help identify cases promptly.

If you think your child is a close contact but have not been contacted directly by NHS Test and Trace then they should take a PCR test via Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus (COVID-19) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) or by calling 119. **When ordering a PCR test it is important to check the box (online) or tell 119 'I've been told to get a test by my health protection team' <u>and not</u> 'I've been told to get a test by my school or nursery'.** Further guidance can be found at Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection who do not live with the person - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

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

If your child develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), they should get a PCR test and remain at home at least until the result is known. If negative, the child can end self-isolation; if positive, the child should isolate until at least 10 days after their symptoms appeared. Symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are a new, continuous cough, or a high temperature, or a loss of, or

change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia). If the child has a positive test result but do not have symptoms, they should stay at home and self-isolate for 10 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. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for a PCR test (the normally available test type) and this can be arranged via Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus (COVID-19) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) or by calling 119.

Instructions for people who live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 (tested positive or symptomatic awaiting a test result)

From 16 August, you will not be required to self-isolate if you are a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and any of the following apply:

- you are fully vaccinated
- you are below the age of 18 years 6 months
- you have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- you are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Fully vaccinated means that you have been vaccinated with an MHRA approved COVID-19 vaccine in the UK, and at least 14 days have passed since you received the recommended doses of that vaccine.

NHS Test and Trace will contact you to let you know that you have been identified as a contact and check whether you are legally required to self-isolate. If you are not legally required to self-isolate, you will be provided with advice on testing and given guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19. Even if you do not have symptoms, you will be advised to have a PCR test as soon as possible.

Any member of the household who is aged 18 years and 6 months or over and has only received one dose of COVID-19 vaccine or has not received any dose of the COVID-19 vaccination will still be required to self-isolate as household contact of a someone with COVID-19 symptoms awaiting testing and someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Please read the stay at home guidance which provides information on this.

Household members who are not exempt from isolation as close contacts should not go to work, school/college/childcare/education setting or public areas, and exercise should be taken within the home. If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you should ask friends or family. Alternatively, you can order your shopping online and medication by phone or online. Household members staying at home for 10 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.

You could be fined if you do not self-isolate following a notification by NHS Test and Trace. You may be entitled to a one-off payment of £500 through the NHS Test and Trace Support Payment scheme if you are required to stay at home and self-isolate or you are the parent or guardian of a child who has been told to self-isolate.

Those who are clinically extremely vulnerable should be supported to minimise their contact with other people in the household during this period, regardless of whether others have symptoms or not.

Instructions for household contacts who are not required to self-isolate from 16 August

Even if you are vaccinated, you can still be infected with COVID-19 and pass it on to others. If you are identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 but you are not required to self-isolate, you can help protect others by following the guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread. As well as getting a PCR test, you may also consider:

- limiting close contact with other people outside your household, especially in enclosed spaces
- wearing a face covering for those aged 11 and over in crowded places such as school/college/public transport
- limiting contact with anyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable
- taking part in regular LFD testing

You should follow this advice while the person in your household with COVID-19 is self-isolating.

If you are a health or social care worker or a student undertaking a work placement who has been identified as a household contact and are exempt from self-isolation, there is additional guidance available that you should follow to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 in these settings.

If you develop symptoms at any time, even if these are mild, self-isolate immediately, arrange to have a COVID-19 PCR test and follow the guidance for people with COVID-19 symptoms.

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

If your child does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from the nhs.uk website at https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/. If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, or they are worsening you can seek advice from NHS 111 at https://111.nhs.uk/ or by phoning 111.

How to stop coronavirus (COVID-19) spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with coronavirus (COVID-19):

- get vaccinated – everyone aged 18 and over can book COVID-19 vaccination appointments now and 16-17 year olds are being offered 1 dose of the vaccination by 23 August
- wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day
- 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
- meet people outside and avoid crowded areas

- open doors and windows to let in fresh air if meeting people inside
- wear a face covering if aged 11 and over when it's hard to stay away from other people – particularly indoors or in crowded places
- participate in twice weekly LFD testing following national guidelines (recommended for 11 years and over). We encourage you to log your results here: https://www.gov.uk/log-test-site-covid19-results

Further Information

Further information is available at
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

Mitigating measures within school

The school continues to manage risk as far as possible in school and details of measures have been shared with parents and are available on our website:

http://www.topsham.devon.sch.uk/uploads/6/0/9/5/60950539/ra_100_risk_assessment_updated_13th_nov_2021.pdf

In line with Public Health advice we have and will continue to implement these measures, while at the same time reintroducing some of the more robust measures we had in place prior to the school's full reopening on Monday 11th October.

Mitigating measures include:

- FSU, Year 1 and 2 will remain in separate 'bubbles'. This means they will not mix with any other year group in the school and will play, separately in their class groups, on separate playgrounds, at playtime and lunch time.

- Key Stage 2 to be remain in class bubbles as far as possible

- Lunch times have and will continue to remain staggered to ensure all classes are 'bubbled' in the hall

- Staff have resumed wearing face shields and/or masks and all school assemblies will be held remotely

- Staff who have been in close contact with a positive case will do lateral flows each day until end of isolation period

- We have and will continue to operate a 1 in 1 out system for use of toilets to mitigate risk in these areas of the school

- Tables in Key Stage 2 (Year 3, 4, 5 and 6) will revert to being placed in rows, facing the front

- Yr 3 and 4 when exiting via their shared cloakroom to do so one class at a time to limit mixing

- Twiglets will 'bubble' the children and will spend as much time outside as possible to mitigate risk. If deemed necessary Twiglets will return to being in the hall. Parents will be communicated with prior to any change being made in relation to where Twiglets will be based.

- Key Stage 2 staff will return to using a separate staff room

- At this time clubs will continue unless Public Health advise otherwise and parents will be informed as soon as possible. Staff will support social distancing and 'bubbling' as far as possible.

The role of parents in helping us at this time:

- At present we will continue to have parents on site to drop off and collect children, however from Monday please can we ask parents to wear face coverings (unless exempt) to protect themselves and others.

- Children in year groups 1-6 do not need to be in class until 8.55 which is when registration starts and Nursery and Reception children do not need to be in class until 9am. The school gates are opened at 8.45am and all children, apart from Reception and Nursery can go straight into class from this time. ***The reason we have given this 10 minute window is in the hope parents and children will come and go fluidly during this time, not all on mass at 8.45am***

  Please can we ask that parents drop and go as quickly as possible and stay socially distanced whilst on the school site, supporting their children to do so as far as possible. This is very important at pick up where we have allowance for a more staggered exit.

  Public Health may advise that drop off and pick up routines need to return to being staggered if they or we feel this could mitigate risk further. Parents will be informed as soon as possible if this becomes necessary.

- Limiting face to face meetings with parents as far as possible; thank goodness we had organised parent consultations to be via school cloud ☺.

  If you are unable to attend a meeting with a member of staff via School Cloud or another remote platform, you may be offered a telephone call or a face-to-face meeting in a space large enough for all to maintain social distancing.

Staff, in consultation with the Headteacher, will decide whether a face-to-face meeting is the best option. Parents will be asked to wear face masks during any face-to-face meeting and staff will continue to wear face shields and/or a mask.

- Please can you ensure your child/children wear an under layer and a jumper as windows will be open to support ventilation. We will of course ensure temperatures remain at a comfortable level.

We, like you want to do all we can to keep case numbers down. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Emma Pipe
Headteacher