



13/09/21

Dear Parent/Carer,

Last week we shared the updated guidance regarding contact tracing in schools.

The key changes that have been introduced from 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021 are;

- PHA will contact parents directly if their child has tested positive for Covid-19 and work with the parent to identify very close contacts.
- Schools are no longer required to identify close contacts (except in a limited number of circumstances) and whole classes will not routinely be asked to self-isolate and take PCR tests.

Parents are now requested to report a Covid-19 related absence in the same way as other absences are reported, by contacting the school office.

Many parents will be relieved by the changes outlined as it means that there should be significantly less disruption to our children's education. However, I also recognise that the revised guidance could cause more anxiety for some families. To this end, be assured that we will continue to use class bubbles, maintain our cleaning practices and continue to promote regular hand washing and respiratory hygiene to try to reduce any potential spread of Covid-19.

We would ask you to continue to do your bit too by asking that anyone dropping off or collecting a child at school to wear a mask and observe social distancing.

Where there is a confirmed case in school, we will send a text message to the parents/carers of pupils from the class and refer them to the PHA Alert letter that will be available on the school website under the 'News' section and also on the class platforms.

As before, parents are asked not to send children to school if they are unwell or are showing any symptoms of 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 staff observe a child displaying any of the symptoms outlined, we will continue to follow PHA guidance. The child, and any members of their household within the school setting, will be sent home and advised to follow the PHA guidance regarding isolation and testing.

If a child has to self-isolate as a result of testing positive for Covid-19 or while waiting for a PCR test result, the class teacher will provide some work for them to complete at home, if they are well enough. However, please understand that teachers will be in class all day with the majority of the pupils and it will not be possible for them to monitor or respond to work, or questions, on the online platform. Class teachers will provide you with more information about this.

It has been a disruptive start to the school year for many pupils, families and staff. I hope that these new arrangements will allow for a more settled term. We will keep you updated on any future changes.

Kind regards,

Mr Kelly