Health Protection Duty Room
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Website:- www.publichealth.hscni.net

19/10/2021

ADDITIONAL PCR TESTING AS PART OF COVID-19 CLUSTER INVESTIGATION

Dear Parent / Guardian,

The Public Health Agency has been notified of a number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Kings Park Primary School community. We have worked closely with the school principal and management team to review all the cases and undertake a risk assessment in the school. All those who were high risk close contacts of the cases have been identified, advised to self-isolate and get a PCR test. Even though the school has a range of other measures in place to reduce transmission, we are investigating the cluster to reduce the risk of further spread.

To help with this we would like to find out if other students might also be infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. **We are offering pupils in P5 class at Kings Park Primary School a COVID test even if they do not have symptoms.**

We would ask that pupils remain at home until the results of the PCR test are available. This will also allow the school the opportunity for any additional cleaning measures required. If the PCR test is negative, your child can return to school. If the result is positive, this means they have the infection and they should self-isolate for 10 days, in line with advice for confirmed cases. Please see Coronavirus (COVID-19): self-isolating | nidirect for guidance on whether other people in your household also need to self-isolate if the PCR result is positive.

If your child has had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days

If your child has had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days AND has no new symptoms, you do not need to take any action. We do not advise retesting in recently infected people who are well, because PCR tests can continue to find non-infectious parts of the virus for several weeks. However, if your child does develop new symptoms they should stay at home and get a free PCR test as soon as possible. They should self-isolate at home until they get the result of that test.

The test

The test will involve taking a nose and throat swab, which is done by gently rubbing a soft cotton swab on the tonsils and up one nostril. This is a self-test although younger children will need help carrying out the test. Instructions will be provided. However, we would recommend that you visit the PHA website for detailed instructions and a video showing how to do the test.

https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/testing-and-tracing-covid-19/testing-covid-19

How to book a test

You can book a test online at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by phoning 119. When you are booking the PCR test online, under the section 'why are you asking for a test', please select 'I have been told by contact tracers to get a test.' When asked for a code, please enter 5011124J. We are asking you to enter the code as it helps us monitor and assess COVID clusters when they occur. While you should still be able to book a test even if you do not enter the code, it helps us if you do.

Tests can be arranged at your closest testing site or by requesting a postal kit which will be sent to your home address. You can choose whichever option is more convenient for you. Going for a COVID test is one of the reasons your child can leave home during the self-isolation period, however, they should not use public transport. Please order a postal test if you do not have private transport to a test site.

Results

Results will be sent to you by text or email. This usually happens within 48 hours of the test being taken.

What to do if your child develops 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)

Please book a free PCR test, **even if an earlier one was negative**. Your child should stay at home and self-isolate until you receive the result. Please see Coronavirus (COVID-19): self-isolating | nidirect for guidance on whether other

people in your household also need to self-isolate while you are waiting for your child's PCR result.

Always get a **PCR test** if you or your child have symptoms. Lateral Flow Device tests should not be used in this situation as you may still have COVID-19 even if you have a negative result.

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:

- **Please get vaccinated if you or your child are eligible and haven't already done so;**
- Take part in regular lateral flow testing if this is offered to you or your child;
- Keep rooms well ventilated;
- Self-isolate and book a PCR test when you have symptoms or have been advised to by Contact Tracing;
- Follow the current advice on face coverings and physical distancing;
- Wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds – and 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 and put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards.

Further information

For further information, please see the NI Direct website Coronavirus (COVID-19): self-isolating | nidirect the Public Health Agency website https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus or contact NHS 111. If

your child feels unwell and you are worried about their symptoms or about anyone else in the home, please contact your GP.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Brid Farrell
Acting Director of Public Health
Public Health Agency