Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome back to the Summer term. Public Health at Warwickshire County Council, working alongside the Education Department are leading on the management of COVID-19 cases in settings. As cases reduce locally and nationally, we are reviewing the actions we are recommending preventing cases coming into the setting, to reduce spread as far as possible within the setting and community. Therefore, there will be additional information to previous guidance.

We would like to share some key messages and recommended actions, which are outlined below

**Face Coverings:**

- Ensure that you wear face coverings (covering your nose and mouth) when dropping off and collecting children, maintaining distancing on the way in and way out of the setting. We have had reports across the County of lapses in social distancing and use of face coverings.

**Testing: At Home rapid Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests.**

- To support reduction in community transmission, we advise household members to undertake rapid/ LFD testing twice weekly (minimum once a week), if you have a child in school or if you are unable to work from home.

  Please order your home rapid LFD (plastic cartridge home test kits), They can be used twice a week (3-5 days apart) and can be reordered daily. They can be collected locally from:

  - PCR walk in centres (from 1-8pm daily) - you can find your nearest collection site here: https://find-covid-19-rapid-test-sites.maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk (please check times at your local site)
  - If the walk-in centres are not close to you, you can have LFD tests delivered to your home by Royal Mail, usually within 24hrs. These can be found from this website. https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests

- All results from at-home LFD tests require registering online and any positive results require a confirmatory PCR test within 72 hrs of the test. Following a positive result, the household should self-isolate. The person who tested positive should have a PCR test and only if it is negative can they and the household stop isolating. Early years and school bubbles will isolate based on a positive result and return once the test is confirmed as negative.

  ***If you are planning on using a walk-in test centre for your confirmatory PCR test – please note these now close for appointments at 1pm (last test 12.30pm). Please book your PCR test as soon as you have a positive LFD.*** You can book PCR tests via https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by ringing 119

**Note: Those that have tested positive for Coronavirus by PCR are exempt from a further PCR or LFT/D test for 90 days, unless they develop new symptoms, or have otherwise been exposed and advised to do so**

- **It is crucial, that in addition to the regular testing with rapid LFD, that anyone with COVID-19 symptoms accesses a PCR test via https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by ringing 119. If you are unwell with a new continuous cough, high temperature or a loss or change in taste or smell, you and your household must self-isolate for 10 days from the date of first symptoms, unless there is a negative PCR test result.**

**When you or your child are self-isolating as a close contact of a case**

- We know that when isolating as a close contact, some close contacts may become positive for COVID-19 without showing any symptoms and unaware they have the virus. In addition, this can pass onto household members who may become unwell or not show any symptoms. We advise all children and family members to rapid LFD test with home test kits when a member of the household is self isolating to reduce the likelihood of cases . This is above the national guidance for community testing, and as such will include all children in the household. These tests can pick up some cases without symptoms in the household (order them as above). They should be used twice a week (3-5 days apart) and can be reordered daily. Day three and day eight of your isolation are ideal days to test. If you haven't been able to test during isolation, then testing on the day after isolation (day 11) before they return to the setting would be ideal.

  **Note: Those that have tested positive for Coronavirus by PCR are exempt from a further PCR or LFT/D test for 90 days, unless they develop new symptoms, or have otherwise been exposed and advised to do so**

**Cases in households**

- Same as the guidance above, when there have been cases in a household we would ask household member to test on day three and day eight of the isolation. If you haven't been able to test during isolation, then testing on the day after isolation (day 11) before they return to the setting would be ideal.

  Whilst LFD tests do not rule out COVID-19, they may pick up some cases and support safe return to the setting. We recommend you book your tests in advance. All LFD tests are better taken first thing in the morning (as early as possible – but not the night before).

**Be aware of COVID in your home.**

- Please note, that while COVID-19 usually presents with a new continuous cough, high temperature and loss or change in taste or smell. COVID-19 can present with other symptoms such as; sore throat, severe fatigue/ feeling

unwell for no clear reason, poorly tummy, headache and muscle aches. Looking out for these less common symptoms is especially important for those with a child/ren self isolating - if your child or even members of your household become unwell in the isolation period, although it may be a seasonal cold, please consider this could be COVID-19.

- You/your child can PCR test whilst they are isolating and should test if they have symptoms. Those self-isolating should not attend community Lateral Flow Test (LFD) centres. PCR tests (not LFD tests) should be used for people who are have symptoms as these are the most accurate test. You can book a PCR test online at https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by ringing 119. When booking online, you can tick that box that states "Public Health/ Local authority has requested you book a test". You **are** permitted to have a test with lesser symptoms, but the household legally do not need to isolate at that stage, unless anyone has a cough, temperature, loss or change in taste or sense of smell).
- When someone in the household has COVID-19, wherever possible, avoid using shared spaces such as kitchens and other living areas while others are present and take your meals back to your room to eat. Wear a face covering when spending time in shared areas inside your home. Increase cleaning of things and surfaces people touch, do not share towels, use hand sanitiser, ensuring that handles of cups, trays, and cutlery/crockery are cleaned appropriately between uses.

**What to do if your child is unwell?**

As cases are much lower in the community, we will expect to see less cases in the setting and anyone unwell are more likely to be seasonal colds. COVID-19 can present with other symptoms such as; sore throat, severe fatigue/ feeling unwell for no clear reason, poorly tummy, headache and muscle aches. Before COVID we would ask unwell children to remain home until they are feeling better as we wouldn't want to have nasty colds going around the setting.

If there are high numbers of cases in the setting or community then we would ask that a child unwell tests for COVID by PCR as this is the more accurate for children with symptoms, results take a day on average. However, as a minimum we would expect children to rapid home LFD test based on symptoms. Although those with a high temperature, new consistent cough, loss or change in sense of smell must PCR based on national guidance.

Thank you for your support with the above recommendations, designed to support maintain education provision for your child(ren), and to keep you, your families, your setting, and your local community safe.

Kindest Regards

Liann Brookes-Smith

Public health Warwickshire County Council