

Dear Headteachers,

You will have received information on new coronavirus measures for visitors to schools on 17/09/2020. This update can be found at <https://mysefton.co.uk/2020/09/18/new-coronavirus-measures-for-seftons-schools/>. A series of new local measures were also been confirmed across Merseyside on 18/09/2020. These restrictions do not directly impact on educational settings but are in response to increasing rates of positive COVID-19 cases. Further information can be found at <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/coronavirus>.

In these current unprecedented times, we understand that you may have many queries and questions. We wanted to write to you to give clarity around Test and Trace capacity and provide answers to some frequently asked questions (FAQS.) We are asking for your support to communicate this information to parents and carers. You are a trusted voice and we know parents and carers listen to the information you provide. We would also encourage you to share this advice with your school nurse or relevant trained first aiders.

### Cheshire and Merseyside Test and Trace (T&T)

Over the last few weeks we have seen an unprecedented demand for testing. NHS Test and Trace figures show that between mid-June and the end of August the number of people getting tested for the first time rose by 63% - and this trend continues. The Testing Programme in Cheshire and Merseyside is experiencing continued exceptionally high demand. As such, at this time of high demand it is crucial that:

- people only get tested if they develop one or more of the main coronavirus symptoms: a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or the loss or change of their sense of taste or smell; or they are recommended to get tested by a healthcare provider (e.g. GP or nurse)
- pupils and students who feel unwell with other symptoms for example with a sore throat, stomach upset or a headache, do not need to book a test. They may need to stay off school or college and seek medical advice through their GP or pharmacist as usual.
- there is no need for household members of those who are symptomatic to have a test, unless they are also symptomatic.
- parents and carers should not take children to A&E departments for a test. Most hospitals will only test people who they admit to hospital.

- schools must not require students to provide evidence of a negative test before letting them back to school.

## Other Frequently Asked Questions

### What should schools testing kits be used for?

All schools and further education providers will have received an initial supply of 10 test kits. These Coronavirus (COVID-19) test kits should only be offered in the exceptional circumstance an individual becomes symptomatic and you believe they may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere.

These symptoms are a high temperature, a new, continuous cough and a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

Further guidance can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-home-test-kits-for-schools-and-fe-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-home-test-kits-for-schools-and-fe-providers>.

### Pupils and staff are not using home-testing kits correctly and this is delaying results. Is there guidance or advice on the use of 'home testing kits'?

Public Health England (PHE) have produced useful guidance on the use of self-test kits (suitable for 18+ without supervision and 12-17 with adult supervision) and also on how to test children under the age of 11.

The guides can be found here and can be printed off for use

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/907961/Coronavirus\\_home\\_test\\_step-by-step\\_guide.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907961/Coronavirus_home_test_step-by-step_guide.pdf)

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### What happens if a pupil or staff member tests positive?

If a pupil or staff member tests positive, they must stay at home and not leave the house for 10 days from the start of their symptoms. Their household members need to also stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days from the day the individual first showed symptoms.

More information about can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>.

### When can a pupil or staff member that has tested positive return to the educational setting?

- Pupils and staff members who have tested positive can return to the educational setting after the 10-day isolation period if they no longer have a temperature. If they are still experiencing a temperature after 10 days of isolation, they should continue to stay at home and not leave the house and seek medical advice.

- Pupils and staff can still return to the educational setting after 10 days if they have a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste, as these symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.
- After the 10-day isolation period, pupils and staff members do not need to provide evidence of a negative test to be allowed back to the educational setting. Educational settings must not ask for evidence.

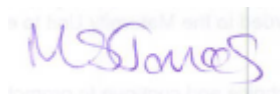
### **What happens if you are a contact of someone who is positive?**

- If you are a contact of someone who has tested positive and you have been informed of this by Public Health England (PHE), the local health protection team or the educational setting, you must isolate for 14 days.
- Contacts of people who have tested positive can return to the educational setting after 14 days if they do not display any symptoms during the isolation period. They do not need to provide a negative test to be allowed back to the educational setting. Educational settings must not ask for evidence.
- Contacts of people who have tested positive should not get a test unless they develop symptoms or are advised by the local authority or health professional.
- If the contact does develop symptoms, they should get a test. If the test is negative, they should continue to isolate for the 14-day period. If the test is positive, they should follow the normal procedure for a positive test (see above question).

### **What should happen if a pupil or staff member's sibling or household member has symptoms?**

- All household members of someone who is symptomatic must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. They do not require a test unless they develop symptoms themselves.
- Household members of someone who tests positive, must continue to stay at home and should not leave the house for 14 days. They do not require a test unless they develop symptoms themselves or are advised by the local authority or health professional.

Yours truly,



MARGARET JONES

Director of Public Health

Sefton Council