

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope everyone had a pleasant weekend. As we look forward to another busy and productive week please see a number of updates below:

### **COVID-19 procedures**

As anticipated, we are supporting Braes families dealing with instances of COVID-19, and self-isolation from having been identified as close contacts. If your young person has COVID-19 symptoms, or has tested positive in a Lateral Flow Device test, they should not come into school, and nor should anyone else in the household. Instead, the household should isolate, and a PCR test should be booked. Please keep the school informed of such situations.

### **Face Coverings**

It is encouraging that the vast majority of young people continue to ensure they bring a face covering to school with them. We will provide a face covering to those young people who forget to bring one. The support of parents/carers in encouraging all young people to bring a face covering to school is appreciated.

### **Self-isolation**

From 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021 the self-isolation policy changed. To be clear, anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 or who tests positive using a PCR or LFD test will have to self-isolate immediately in line with NHS guidance. However there are changes for the situation when someone is deemed a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. These are detailed below:

If you are a close contact aged **more than 18 and 4 months** who lives in the household of the positive case, OR who has been identified by Test and Protect as needing to take action, then:

- if you are fully vaccinated (two doses, with at least 2 weeks having passed after your second dose), you should self-isolate and book a PCR test
- if the PCR test is negative and you remain without symptoms, you can end self-isolation and go about your daily life, including returning to work or school
- if the PCR test is positive, you should continue to self-isolate in line with NHS Inform
- if you subsequently become symptomatic you should self-isolate and book a PCR test
- if you are unvaccinated, have only a single dose of the vaccine, or had a second dose less than two weeks previously, you should self-isolate and book a PCR test. You should continue to self-isolate regardless of the results of the test, in line with NHS Inform

If you are a close contact aged between **5 years to 18 years and 4 months**, who lives in the household of the positive case, OR who has been identified by Test and Protect as needing to take action, then:

- you should self-isolate and book a PCR test
- if the PCR test is negative and you remain without symptoms, you can end self-isolation and go about your daily life, including returning to work, school or childcare
- if the PCR test is positive, you should continue to self-isolate in line with NHS guidance
- if you subsequently become symptomatic you should self-isolate and book a PCR test

If a close contact is aged under 5 years then they will not need to self-isolate if they remain without symptoms.

People who have had a positive PCR test in the previous 90 days do not require to repeat this.

**In any of these circumstances please contact the school to advise of your situation.**

### **Contact tracing**

People who live in the same household as the person who has tested positive for/has symptoms of COVID-19 will be contacted by Test and Protect and advised to take the actions set out above. This is because much of the spread of COVID-19 takes place in household settings. Test and Protect will also speak to the person who has tested positive for COVID-19 and identify close contacts where there is judged to be a higher likelihood of the virus being passed on. They will then get in touch with those close contacts and ask them to take the actions set out above.

Schools will also be asked by Test and Protect to take action to “warn and inform” other potential contacts, where there is judged to be a lower likelihood of the virus being passed on.

For schools, when a person who attends tests positive, contact tracers will:

- contact the person or their parent/carer, and ask them to identify any individual contacts with very close contact and high risk of transmission and give them individualised messages about testing and self-isolation
- there will be a particular focus on household contacts e.g. siblings or social settings involving prolonged contact (e.g. sleepover, intimate contacts)
- Test and Protect will also ask the individual or their parents/carers whether there has been any unusually close or prolonged contact when in school, with either adults or children and young people, that may mean there is a higher risk of transmission

If Test and Protect deem it necessary, they may contact the school to inform us of the positive case and ask if we are aware of any unusually close or prolonged contacts the positive case may have had in school. This will not involve “business as usual” contacts where the relevant mitigations are being followed. For example, simply being seated next to a positive case in class will not necessarily result in a requirement to self-isolate and take a PCR test. If contact tracers assess there is no requirement for a direct call to the school, they will nevertheless request that the pupil/parent/carer informs the school of the case. When the school is informed of a positive case, we will also identify groups (e.g. class, school year, school trip) of other potential contacts in the school and give them a “warn and inform” letter, which sets out the steps required of these lower risk potential contacts.

In summary, such contacts are not required to self-isolate, but they should continue with any regular testing programme e.g. the secondary school LFD programme, stay vigilant for symptoms and take precautions to limit any potential spread.

### **Parking/drop off areas**

The focus on safety by Braes parents/carers when driving in and around the school grounds is appreciated. Please continue to use the drop-off area at the front of the school, and avoid parking on raised kerb areas. It is of course really important that disabled parking bays remain available for those who require them.

## **Ipads**

The deployment of Ipads to pupils still to receive them will take place shortly. In the meantime it has been great to see our young people engaging with these devices and they are very much part of the routine now in how lessons take place. Therefore, every young person should ensure they bring their Ipad to school with them, fully charged.

We will continue to keep parents/carers up to date with how our school is progressing in the days and weeks to come. I wish all Braes families well, and look forward to seeing our young people continue to progress and thrive this week.

Yours faithfully,

Iain Livingstone