CORNWALL COUNCIL
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Dear Parent/Carer,

It has been great to see so many children and young people returning to school and the work that has been conducted locally to ensure a safe return. It is inevitable that for some children and young people they will feel unwell and this could include COVID-19 related symptoms.

As we often see at the start of a new term, some children and young people will pick up viruses and other bugs from others and feel unwell, though in most cases this will not be COVID-19 and we encourage you to speak to your GP, if you have any concerns.

However, it is difficult to rule COVID-19 out when children and young people have much milder symptoms than adults.

COVID-19 has not gone away and it remains extremely important that any child or young person with symptoms stays away from school to avoid the risk of spreading infection to others, including the more vulnerable in our communities. This is the reason we ask children and young people with COVID-19 related symptoms to isolate at home until they get a test result.

Those symptoms are:

- **high temperature** – feeling hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **new, continuous cough** – coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different from normal

Over the last week we have seen a number of children being referred for a COVID-19 test in accordance with national guidance.

We are very aware that in Cornwall, as elsewhere, there have been delays in accessing tests. This is a national issue as laboratory capacity for analysing tests is being directed to areas in the country with the highest numbers of COVID-19 cases. We are doing all we can to ensure adequate testing is made available by the Department of Health and Social Care in Cornwal

We understand how frustrating this can be, particularly with children returning to school and being asked to stay off school until they can get a COVID-19 test. However, it is crucial that we keep our schools open, and continue to keep our children and communities safe.

We therefore ask that you continue to follow government guidance and keep your child at home and book a test as soon as you are able. You only need to get a test if your child has the symptoms listed above. If your child has these symptoms, it is really important that you do not send them to school. The test is best done in the first 5 days of having symptoms.

The current routes for getting a test are:

- Parents book a test online at https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/coronavirus-in-children/ or by calling 119
- If parents or carers are unable to book a local slot then they can email d-ccg.cornwalldevon.urgenttesting@nhs.net for advice, and will be assessed for urgent testing.
- Please do not go to your GP or hospital emergency department to seek a test. If you are concerned about your child's symptoms ring 111.

If you are not able to secure a test, it is important that your child remains away from school for the 10-day isolation period. As part of creating a COVID-19 safe school, children must not return before the isolation period is over. Please work with your school to keep all children and young people safe.

We would like to reassure you that we are working hard to put additional local arrangements in place to boost our local testing availability until national testing capacity can be increased and we will update you as soon as the situation changes.

Yours sincerely

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