

Monday 19th July, 2021

Dear School Family,

Below is the latest guidance from Plymouth Local Authority and Plymouth CAST.

Re: Changes to contact tracing in schools and colleges

As you know, the Prime Minister announced on 12 July that Step 4 of the roadmap would go ahead on 19 July.

One of the key changes that will take place from 19 July is that education and childcare settings will no longer be asked to conduct routine contact tracing. As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with either the positive case – or in the case of children – the parents, carers or guardian of the positive case to identify close contacts.

NHS Test and Trace already manages the contact tracing process for the rest of society – including children who have recorded a positive PCR test – and has expertise in supporting people to identify close contacts. This letter sets out in more detail below how that process will work and what you need to do if your child tests positive for COVID-19.

Plymouth CAST Guidance is in line with this however I draw your attention to point 4:

1. Current control measures remain in place until the end of the Summer Term 22.7.21
2. Bubbles remain in place wherever possible. Ours are changing to single year groups for this week.
3. Children or staff with a positive test self-isolate, but schools don't automatically send the whole bubble home.
4. **Following a positive case in the bubble, school undertakes a best-endeavours risk assessment/contact trace evaluation of adults/children in that bubble, and any individuals judged to be close contacts are asked to self-isolate, be tested etc. If that means that a whole bubble is sent home, then so be it.**
5. Detailed guidance for September will be prepared and provided to schools ASAP.

In terms of our pupils and classroom sizes at Keyham Barton, bubbles will now change to single year groups. Each class is one bubble and we will not be mixing until the end of term. Given the size of our classrooms, if a child tests positive, we will ask that that class isolate only. Fingers crossed we don't need to do this but looking at the rising cases across Plymouth and the amount of whole school closures this week, this is, I believe, the best way to keep us all safe.

Government Guidance from today outlined below:

Self-isolating and taking a test

1. *If your child has symptoms, they and other members of the household should self-isolate – and you should inform their education or childcare setting. You should immediately order a PCR test for them. If the PCR result is negative, they and other members of their household can stop self-isolating (unless instructed to self-isolate for other reasons). If the PCR result is positive, they, other members of their household and any close contacts identified by NHS Track and Trace must self-isolate until 10 days after the onset of symptoms.*
2. *If your child has a positive result from a lateral flow device (LFD) test, they and other members of the household should self-isolate – and you should inform their education or childcare setting. You should immediately order a confirmatory PCR test. If the confirmatory test is taken within two days and the result is negative, they and other members of their household can stop self-isolating (unless instructed to self-isolate for other reasons). If the confirmatory PCR test is positive (or is taken more than two days after the LFD), other members of their household and any close contacts identified by NHS Track and Trace must self-isolate until 10 days after the LFD test.*

3. PCR tests can be booked online through the [NHS Test & Trace website](#) or by calling 119.
4. PCR test results will be recorded with NHS Test and Trace automatically, but you should also communicate the result to the education or childcare setting during term time or summer provision.

Contact tracing

5. If your child gets a positive PCR test result, NHS Test and Trace will contact you, using the details you registered when ordering the PCR test. You and/or your child will be asked a series of specific questions designed to identify who your child has been in close contact with. Being in an education or childcare setting with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 will not necessarily mean a person is identified as a close contact.
6. You will be asked to provide the contact details, if you know them, of any of the individuals – or their parents or guardians – who have been identified as close contacts. NHS Test and Trace will then get in touch with these close contacts and provide appropriate instructions or advice (see below).

Self-isolation and/or testing of close contacts

7. At present, anyone identified as a close contact is legally required to self-isolate and must not attend their education or childcare setting (the only exception is if they are participating in a daily contact testing trial). Anyone identified as a non-household close contact by NHS Track and Trace must self-isolate until 10 days after the date of their most recent contact with that person. If they live in the same household, they must self-isolate until 10 days after the date of that person developing symptoms (see point 1 above) or, if that person was asymptomatic, the date of their test (see point 2 above). NHS Test and Trace will notify you of the day on which the self-isolation period ends.
8. Close contacts are also advised to take a PCR test. If the test result is negative, they must still complete the full self-isolation period, as the test will not detect all positive cases. If the result is positive, they will need to self-isolate for a further 10 days – and NHS Test and Trace will contact them to identify any close contacts.
9. **From 16 August**, if the close contact is under 18, they will not have to self-isolate (in line with the policy for fully vaccinated adults) but will be asked to take a PCR test immediately, other than for very young children identified as non-household contacts, and they will not need to self-isolate while awaiting the results of the test. If the PCR test is positive, they will be required to self-isolate for 10 days from the date of the test. NHS Test and Trace will then get in touch to identify close contacts (see points 5 and 6 above). Further guidance on these changes to self-isolation will be provided shortly.

We recognise how difficult the past 18 months have been and the sacrifices that all families, education and childcare settings have had to make. This has been an enormously challenging time for everyone and we would like to take the opportunity to thank you for everything you have done.

I hope all of this makes sense. We are doing our utmost to keep our community safe. Our one-way system, staggered exits and entries and separate play times will remain in place until the end of term. Each class is now a single bubble so that minimises the number of children we need to isolate if there is a positive test, however if your child is symptomatic, please keep them home and get a PCR test. If it is negative they can return to school. We have managed so incredibly well as a community with only 2 bubble isolations since the pandemic began. We just need to make it to Thursday! I will make decisions on events a day at a time this week so keep an eye on your texts and emails and Facebook. Thank you for all you are doing to support us.

Best wishes
Rachael Riley
Headteacher