

Rowlands Gill Primary School

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Dear Parents / Carers

School Response to Covid-19 Cases / Suspected Covid Cases

Once again, I'd like to thank you all for your continued support of the children, school and staff while we work under these difficult and continually changing circumstances. I'm sure that by now, you will have heard about the new rules limiting the number of people who can meet indoors and outdoors that comes into force from today. However, schools are exempt from this. You will probably also be aware of the fact that Gateshead has been placed on the 'watch list' due to a significant rise in confirmed cases last week. All such indicators remind us how important it is that we all stay alert to the risk of transmission.

I have written this letter to help you understand our school response to Covid-19 and the vital part which you all play in minimising the risks to everyone under each of the various sections. Please remember this has been written following advice as it stands today. The guidance is constantly changing and I have no control over this at all. However, I will always endeavour to update changes as soon as I possibly can. I apologise in advance for the length of this letter but it is a complex issue so I want to be as clear as I can.

Covid Symptoms

- A high temperature
- A new continuous cough (coughing a lot for more than an hour or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours)
- A loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell

It can be difficult to distinguish between Covid, Cold or Flu symptoms. I have attached a general guide at the end of this letter to help parents to distinguish between the common snuffles and sore throats that we always see at this time of year and Covid, however any one of the above symptoms is an indicator of Covid and should be acted upon. **Your child should not attend school if they have any of the above symptoms.**

If your child develops Covid symptoms

They should be tested. This can be arranged online using <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or ring NHS 119. Please inform school that your child is symptomatic and that the test is booked or has been taken and **inform us of the outcome of the test as soon as you receive it** (especially if your child, who attends our school, has tested positive because we will have to take very swift action to protect the rest of the school community).

The whole household should self-isolate while you await the outcome of the test. Your child should isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms. The rest of the house should self-isolate for 14 days from the onset of the symptoms in your child. Other family members should only be tested if they develop symptoms.

If your child does not get tested they cannot return to school until the end of the 10-day self-isolation period.

If your child has a negative test result

Your child can return to school unless they still have a high temperature, in which case, they should continue to self-isolate until they feel well again. If you receive the negative notification during the school day, your child can still return to school that day, even if the registers have closed. Please just contact the office.

Other household members can end self-isolation as long as they have no symptoms.

If your child has a positive test result

You must inform us immediately if your child (who attends our school) tests positive. Your child can return to school after 10 days of isolation unless they still have a temperature, in which case they should continue to self-isolate and you should seek medical advice. They do not need to continue self-isolate beyond the 10th day, if they only have a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste.

Other household members of confirmed cases can stop isolating after 14 days as long as they have not developed any symptoms.

If someone in a bubble develops symptoms / becomes a confirmed case

In our school each class is a bubble. The bubble could be affected if a member of staff, who is part of that bubble, or a child from that bubble tests positive for Covid.

If a child or member of staff develops symptoms while at school, they will be taken to the first aid room and isolated (with supervision). The parent will be contacted and must make arrangements to collect the child immediately and arrange a test. In the case of a staff member, they would leave the site immediately and arrange a test.

If a child or member of staff needs to take a Covid test because they are symptomatic, other members of the bubble and parents will not automatically be informed or asked to self-isolate at this point.

If there is a confirmed case of Covid for a pupil or staff member who is part of the bubble, we inform the North East Health Protection Team who will liaise with the affected individual or parents of the child and with the school. You would be informed of this by school as soon as possible.

In this case, the advice **may** be for the whole bubble to self-isolate. (This is what has happened already last week in other primary schools). Your whole household do not have to self-isolate in this scenario. Further detailed information would be given to you by the Health Protection Team if this were to happen.

It is highly unlikely that there would be a whole school closure and this would only occur if the Health Protection Team advised this as a course of action. Full school closure would only ever be a very last resort.

If a member of your household develops Covid symptoms / Track and Trace asks you to self-isolate

The person who has the symptoms should be tested. This can be arranged online using <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or ring NHS 119. Please inform school that the test has been taken and **inform us of the outcome of the test as soon as you receive it.**

The whole household should self-isolate while you await the outcome of the test. The person with the suspected case should isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms. The rest of the household should self-isolate for 14 days from the onset of the symptoms in the affected family member. Other family members should only be tested if they develop symptoms.

If the result is negative, your household can stop self-isolating and your child can return to school. If the result is positive (or the person does not take a test) your child can not return to school until the end of the 14-day isolation period and providing that they do not have symptoms.

The same principle would apply if you have been contacted by Track and Trace and advised to self-isolate because someone that you / your child / your family have been in close contact with has developed symptoms.

Our office staff will maintain records of children who are not able to attend school due to Covid and will keep a log of the dates when they can return using the self-isolation guidelines which will be discussed with you when you report the absence. If your child returns before the date discussed with you, we will isolate your child and ask you to come and collect them immediately. In order to avoid this situation, please contact the office before sending your child back, to ensure that we are expecting them to return. This is to ensure the safety of everyone.

If a staff member has to self-isolate

We have already had a case where a teacher could not attend school while their daughter was tested for Covid. Until they received a negative test result the teacher could not return. Where this happens, parents would not ordinarily be informed, as we would hope that the situation would be rectified in 24-48 hours and our usual cover systems for short term staff absence would apply.

However, if a member of staff does have to self-isolate for 14 days (because of someone in their household or due to guidance from Track and Trace), we would inform parents and explain our plan for teaching the class for the 14-days. Depending on the circumstances, this would probably be that the higher level teaching assistant, who is linked to the bubble, would be in class with the children and the class teacher would 'remote' into class using Microsoft Teams to teach the lessons through the interactive whiteboard. We have already used this model successfully last week, while the staff member awaited the result for their daughter.

Remote Education Plan / How learning will be supported in the event of a bubble closure or self-isolation

We are working very hard, behind the scenes, to set up a remote education platform for all children. Our aim is to have this ready by the end of September, in line with Government guidance. The idea behind it is that if a bubble has to self-isolate, learning will continue remotely.

Each child will have a log in for an online learning platform where teachers will 'live teach' lessons using video conferencing such as TEAMS or Google Meet, then set work related to the lesson taught which your child would complete online and then submit to the teacher online.

Over the next few weeks, your child will be taught to use the platform in school and some parental 'user guide' videos will be created so that the platforms can be accessed easily at home. The platforms can be used on most devices because they are internet based, so laptops, home pcs and tablets would all be able to access it. Even phones could access the platforms but the small screen may make it harder to complete the work.

This week, I will be sending out a questionnaire to all parents to establish what sort of device you have available for your child at home and how much experience you have of various platforms. I realise that for some parents, online learning can be daunting but we will do all we can to help you and to ensure the children are confident too. In the case of a child not being able to access a device, printed homework will be offered, similar to those we sent at the start of lockdown, but the online learning option is a much easier way of maintaining education for all children (without added pressure for parents).

The online learning will also be available, although in a slightly different form to children who have to self-isolate. Further details about all of this will come out in the next few weeks.

Good Hygiene











We continue to follow the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' strategy and promote thorough handwashing following PHE guidelines at all times across the school day and encourage parents to follow the same at home. If your child does have runny nose, it would be helpful if they could bring in a small packet of tissues to keep in their pocket or on their table.

As already mentioned, this is an ever-changing situation and I truly hope we manage to avoid an outbreak or a situation which would result in bubbles closing for self-isolation. In order for us to remain open safely, we need your continued support and I am very grateful for this.

Yours faithfully

L. Clarke

Mrs L Clarke
Headteacher

SYMPTOM CHART: WHAT TO WATCH FOR				
SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION				
		CORONAVIRUS Symptoms range from mild to severe	COLD Gradual onset of symptoms	FLU Abrupt onset of symptoms
	Fever	Common	Rare	Common
	Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
	Cough	Common (usually dry)	Mild	Common (usually dry)
	Sneezing	No	Common	No
	Aches & Pains	Sometimes	Common	Common
	Runny or snuffy nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes
	Sore Throat	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
	Diarrhoea	Rare	No	Sometimes for children
	Headache	Sometimes	Rare	Common
	Shortness of breath	Sometimes	No	No
EXPRESS				