

Advice around COVID Testing, 3rd January 2022

Please take time to read over this advice, taken from the Highland Council Position Statement, 20/12/21, which has been reviewed to take into account the emergence of the Omicron variant that has changed the previous balance of risks. Omicron is a variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that was designated a Variant of Concern by the WHO on 26th November.



1. The use of Lateral Flow Device (LFD) home testing by secondary pupils and all school staff, is an additional measure to help manage associated risks. All pupils were offered Lateral Flow tests before the holidays, and we would encourage all pupils to take a test before returning.

Our School will continue to make every effort to distribute test kits proactively and regularly to staff and secondary pupils in line with the updated guidance for the programme, and encourage participants to test and report results regularly, including over holiday periods and in advance of return.

2. At-home testing using lateral flow devices will identify asymptomatic individuals in school so that they and their close contacts can self-isolate, minimising the likelihood of passing on the virus. This will help further reduce risks in school, and enhance the confidence of school communities.

3. If your lateral flow test is positive, you should immediately book a PCR test.

4. Households should **Isolate while awaiting PCR Test results**, and if there is a **positive test result, ALL Household contacts of all cases should now isolate for 10 days**. This applies to everyone in the household, irrespective of age, and the self-isolation period cannot be reduced by testing negative or being vaccinated. For the purposes of this guidance, household contacts fall within the wider category of high-risk close contacts and should be treated in the same way.

Identifying high risk contacts of children and young people e.g. pupils who test positive

When a child or young person tests positive, the person contacted by Test and Protect and asked to fill in the online form will be the person who requested the test e.g. the parent of a child, or a young person who has requested a test for themselves.

Details of the following contacts will be sought through the online form:

- Household members
- Anyone who stayed overnight

Child and young person cases are asked not to share contacts from outside the home such as teachers, classroom contacts or friends unless they have had unusually close or prolonged contact with them e.g. provision of close personal care or overnight stays. This is because these non-household child and young person contacts are considered to be low risk, as set out above.

Schools should be informed of positive cases as soon as possible by parents or, in certain circumstances, by Test and Protect after a positive test result is received.

High risk contacts in school should: i. go home. ii. avoid public transport if possible. iii. Wear a face covering, where possible iv. Isolate for ten days, irrespective of vaccination status or PCR result

As soon as schools are informed of a positive case they should take action to identify low risk contacts so they can issue them with a targeted information letter the same day that sets out the actions those low risk contacts should take.

Low risk contacts are most likely to be:

- Pupils sitting close to a confirmed case
- Potential contacts within a class or classes
- Those on a school trip

If you are deemed to be a low risk contact, the school will issue an information letter should be issued by the school. This letter states that low risk contacts should take precautions to limit any potential spread., such as staying vigilant for symptoms, taking an LFD test before returning to the school environment and to continue with a regular LFD testing programme.

If you have any further concern or questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the school.

Tony Breen, Head Teacher