



COMMUNICATION

Clear communication is always important but it is certainly more important now, than ever. It goes without saying that it is essential that you keep us up to date with any Covid issues relating to your family. In terms of our communication with you we will use a couple of key methods:

- Schools NI app - which is available to download from the school website, www.whiteheadps.com. Once the app is downloaded you will receive a notification when a newsletter or message has been posted on the school website. In addition to sending out newsletters, the App will be the **ONLY** method used to inform all parents when we have had a positive case in school, which could mean that your child should not come to school that day or that you are required to collect your child from school. The App will also be used to communicate emergency school closures such as a 'snow day' or in the event of power failure. Changes to key scheduled events such as Sports Day, Games Night etc will also be communicated through the App. **THEREFORE IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO DOWNLOAD THE APP. IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY DONE SO I WOULD ASK YOU TO DOWNLOAD IT AT THE WEEKEND. I WILL SEND A TEST MESSAGE OUT ON MONDAY/TUESDAY TO ENSURE THAT ALL PARENTS ARE RECEIVING THE MESSAGES.**
- Seesaw - all parents should now be connected to Seesaw. Teachers will continue to use Seesaw in order to share pictures of what your child has been doing in school, as a means of direct communication and also to receive negative test results. **IF YOU ARE HAVING PROBLEMS CONNECTING TO SEESAW PLEASE CONTACT MRS LOWRY 02893353280.**

PHA GUIDANCE

Along with lots of schools, the beginning of our school year has been a "bit bumpy" to say the least. We have now had eight positive cases affecting six classes within school.

In school we will continue to use 'class bubbles,' and ensure good hand and respiratory hygiene. I would ask for your continued support by using the one-way system in the playground, maintaining social distance and wearing face masks. In the mornings please do not enter the school until either myself or Mr Brown have opened the gates. When collecting your children in the afternoon please keep the path between the front gate and the Y3/4 playground clear at all times. Y4-7 children can be collected in the playground or you could arrange a meeting place **away from the front gate**. Once again, your support in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Obviously PHA guidance has changed from last year. As with any change there can be a degree of confusion and it does take some time to adapt to the change. **Please read the following information very carefully.**

POSITIVE PCR TEST RESULT

Should your child **test positive on a LFD test, please keep your child at home and arrange a PCR test.**

Should your child test positive on a **PCR test** it is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you inform us immediately, so that we can ensure the safety of all other children and staff in the class.

- **During school hours (8.45am – 4.00pm) please contact Mrs Lowry on 028 93353280.**
- **Outside of school hours PLEASE SEND ME A TEXT MESSAGE ON 07359 015420 WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME AND I WILL RING YOU BACK ACCORDINGLY.** I am happy to receive messages from 6.30am onwards.

Each time I am notified of a positive case I am in direct contact with PHA and I will strictly follow EA & PHA guidelines in order to ensure the safety of all children and their families, as well as all staff and their families. EA have informed me that I have no discretion over the guidelines and that they are set out as Health and Safety Regulations which I must follow.

When a child has tested positive on a PCR test they must isolate for 10 days. According to the current PHA guidance it is only the positive child who is required to isolate. As long as siblings have tested negative they can return to school as normal. When a child is isolating for 10 days the teacher will arrange to send work home on the 2nd day they are absent from school. This work will be sufficient for the isolation period, will be in line with the work that the rest of the class are completing in school and can be marked at home. The teacher may send through more work if they deem it to be appropriate. The teacher will be in contact through Seesaw in order to ascertain:

- **when the child started their isolation and when they will return to school**
- **how the work should be sent home for your child (will the work be collected or sent home with another child)**

CLOSE CONTACT

When someone tests positive on a **PCR test** all those in the “class bubble” can be deemed to be close contacts. Working closely with myself and the parent of the child who has tested positive, PHA will determine when the infectious period was within school. If your child was in school during the infectious period, they will be deemed to be a close contact. As a close contact your child is required to:

- Have a PCR test **(not a LFD test, it must be PCR).**
- Self-isolate until the result of the test.
- Have a PCR test on day 8 (I will communicate which day is day 8 in order to avoid any confusion).

I have included the PHA flowchart for close contacts, a letter from PHA outlining what you should do if you are a close contact and also information for booking a PCR test. These letters could be sent out every time there is a confirmed case, however it is not my intention to do so. **Please keep these copies safe for your reference.**

POSITIVE PCR TEST RESULT IN THE LAST 90 DAYS

If your child has had a positive PCR test within the last 90 days they are NOT required to have another PCR test and CAN continue to attend school (even if they were in school during an infectious period for their class bubble). If your child subsequently develops Covid symptoms, arrange a PCR straightaway and self-isolate until results are available.

I am aware that in addition to the children who have tested positive since school started, there are several children who have tested positive over the summer. If your child has had a positive PCR test (not LFD) in the last 90 days please email a copy of the positive result to Mrs Lowry elowry738@c2kni.net and also send it to your child's teacher on Seesaw. This enables us to plan accordingly for these children to remain in school, even when their 'bubble has burst'.

NEGATIVE PCR

If your child has a negative PCR test (Day 2 & Day 8), please;

- Email the negative result (Day 2 & Day 8) to Mrs Lowry at elowry738@c2kni.net
AND
- Send the negative result (Day 2 & Day 8) to your child's teacher via Seesaw.

Asking for a negative test result is an additional administrative burden for the teaching staff, Mrs Lowry & myself, however it is very reassuring for children, parents and staff to know that everyone who is sharing the small space of the classroom is negative. I appreciate that it is 'another thing' to do, however we really value your support in this way.

Your child can return to school once they have had their day 2 negative result and you have forwarded it Mrs Lowry and your child's teacher. Children do not need to be absent from school on day 8 in order to take their PCR test. Don't forget to forward your day 8 negative result. Should your child's result come through during the school day I am happy for them to proceed to school and report to the office. **When a child is absent because they are required to have a PCR test we are unable to send work home, as this will hopefully be a very short absence.**

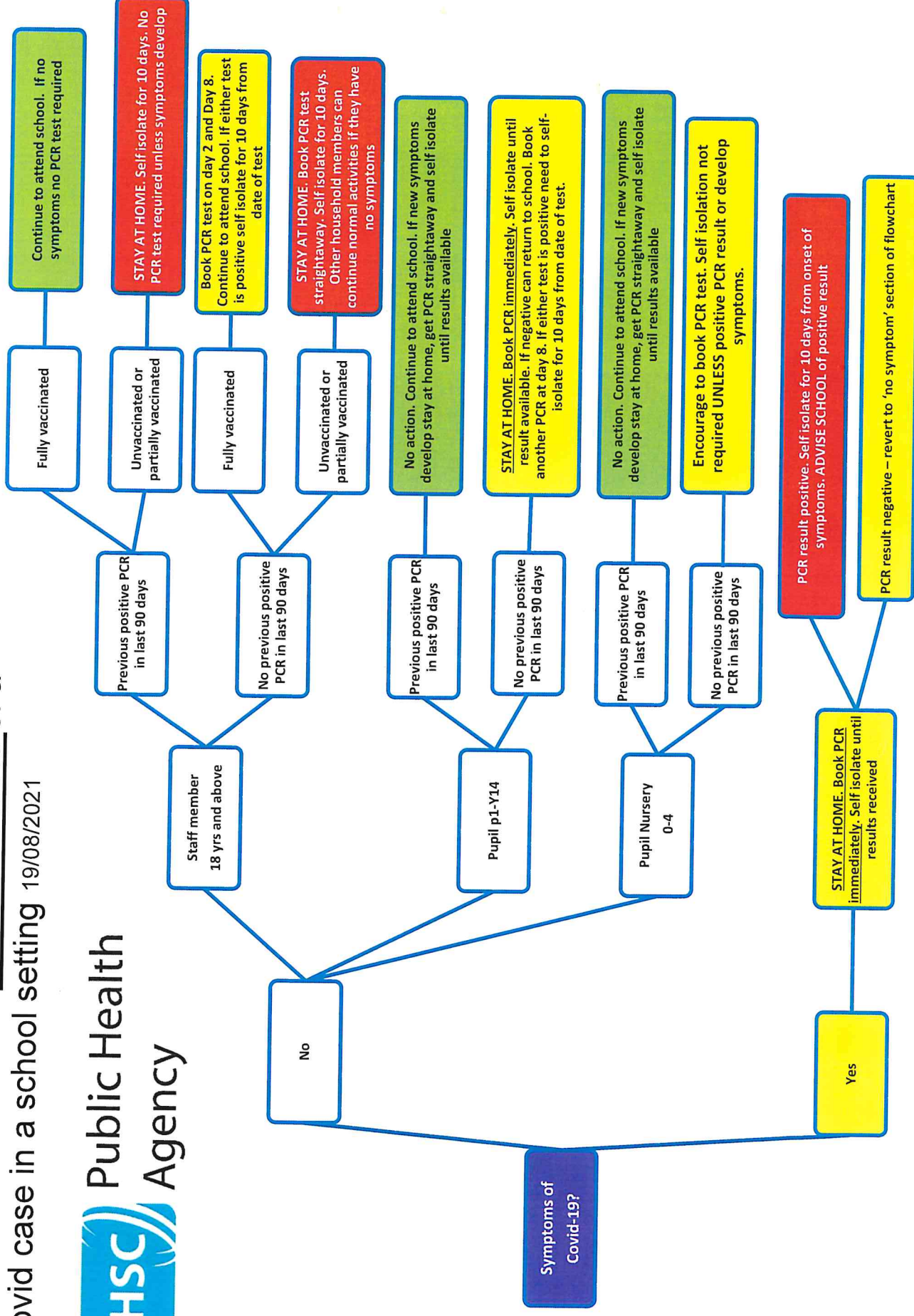
Currently, there is some debate at an EA level, regarding the cleaning of the classroom when there has been a positive case. EA are still keen to clean the classroom, however, given the rising number of cases in schools, they cannot guarantee that the classroom will be cleaned in time for the children returning to school when they receive their negative PCRs. I am hopeful that this issue will be resolved shortly.

I think we had all hoped that we would be in a much better position at the start of this new academic year than we were last year. Sadly, that is not the case, given the spiralling number of positive cases in schools. It is my intention that the children's experience of school will be as normal as I can possibly make it, however the safety of the children and the staff will always be paramount. The Board of Governors and myself will keep all aspects of school under close review.

- Breakfast club has started in the canteen from 7.45-8.45 each day.
- Homework for all the children (except Y7, who have already started) will begin on Monday 13 September.

If you have any queries about school don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher via Seesaw or myself on 02893353280 or by email at jloughins453@c2kni.net.

Guidance Flowchart for Close Contacts of a Covid case in a school setting 19/08/2021





Health Protection Duty Room

Public Health Agency

12-22 Linenhall Street

Belfast

BT2 8BS

Website:- www.publichealth.hscni.net

29/08/2021

Whitehead Primary School

Dear Parent/Guardian,

CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID-19 IN Whitehead Primary School

The Public Health Agency has been notified of a confirmed case of COVID-19 associated with Whitehead Primary School. The Public Health Agency has worked with the school principal to undertake a risk assessment and has identified your child as a **close contact**, which occurred on 17-20 August 2021. **The advice on what to do if a close contact changed on 16th August 2021 so even if you have had letters before from the school about this issue, please take time to read this one.**

Advice to self-isolate and arrange a COVID test

The advice is different depending on whether your child has had a positive PCR test in the previous 90 days (see below).

Even if you follow the advice in this letter and your child is well and has negative PCR results, they should avoid visiting hospitals or care homes for 10 days. They should also minimise contact with people who are at higher risk if they were to catch COVID-19, such as the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable.

What to do if your child is a close contact but has no symptoms

A) If your child has had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days

If your child has had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days AND has no new symptoms, you do not need to take any action and your child can continue to attend school. We do not advise retesting in recently infected people who are well, because PCR tests can continue to find non-infectious parts of the virus for several weeks. However, if your child does develop **new symptoms** they should stay at home and get a free PCR test as soon as possible. They should self-isolate at home until they get the result of that test.

B) If your child has not had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days

Please arrange a free PCR test as soon as possible even if they do not have any symptoms. They should self-isolate at home until they get the result of the test. The rest of the household can carry on with their normal activities as long as all are well. **If that test result is negative your child can return to school.** However please book another PCR test 8 days after their last known contact with the confirmed case. If either test is positive they should self-isolate for 10 days from the date the positive test was done.

How to book a test

You can book a test online at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by phoning 119. When you are booking the PCR test online, under the section 'why are you asking for a test', please select 'I have been told by contact tracers to get a test.' When asked for a code, please enter 20202020. We are asking you to enter the code as it helps us monitor and assess COVID clusters when they occur. While you should still be able to book a test even if you do not enter the code, it helps us if you do.

Tests can be arranged at your closest testing site or by requesting a postal kit which will be sent to your home address. You can choose whichever option is more convenient for you. Going for a COVID test is one of the reasons your child can leave home during the

self-isolation period, however, they should not use public transport. Please order a postal test if you do not have private transport to a test site.

Positive PCR test results in people who are close contacts

If the test is positive:

A **new** period of self-isolation will begin for your child, for 10 days from the date of the test. You will be contacted by the PHA contact tracing service who will ask about the vaccination status of adults in the household to decide whether they need to self-isolate, identify other contacts and provide you with advice about what to do next. If your child is well at the end of the period of self-isolation, then they can return to usual activities.

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature and/or
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

Please book a free PCR test, even if an earlier one was negative. Your child should stay at home and self-isolate until you receive the result. Please see [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): self-isolating | nidirect](#) for guidance on whether other people in your household also need to self-isolate while you are waiting for your child's PCR result.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19:

- **Please get vaccinated if you are eligible and haven't already done so**
- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze

- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

Further information

For further information, please see the NI Direct website [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): self-isolating | nidirect](#) the Public Health Agency website <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus> or contact NHS 111. If your child feels unwell and you are worried about their symptoms or about anyone else in the home, please contact your GP.

I know that organising tests and staying at home waiting for results may be hard for you and your child but it is vital to help reduce the risk of transmission in the community.

Your support is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brid Farrell'.

Dr Brid Farrell

Acting Director of Public Health

Booking your Covid 19 test if you are a close contact

<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

GOV.UK Get a coronavirus test

Is the person who needs a test an essential worker?

Essential workers include health staff, teachers and transport staff. Check the [full list of essential workers on GOV.UK](#)

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ I don't know

Continue

Does the person who needs a test have coronavirus symptoms?

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

Most people with coronavirus have at least one of these symptoms.

☐ Yes, at least one of these symptoms

☒ No, none of these symptoms

Continue

Has the person been asked to get a follow-up test?

For example, their first test was unclear or they need to confirm a possible positive result

☐ Yes

☒ No

Continue

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Is the person who needs a test part of a trial or government pilot project?

For example, they:

- have been invited to take part in the Contact Testing Study
- were told to get a test by the COVID Symptom Study app (by 2018)
- are taking a test before a dental procedure (Dental Patient Testing)

☐ Yes

☒ No

Continue

Why are you asking for a test?

If you are getting a test for someone, please select the reason for their test

☒ I have been in close contact with someone who has coronavirus

☐ My local council or health or education authority asked me to get a test, even though I don't have symptoms

☐ I'm part of the National Test and Trace (N3T2)

☐ I'm in Scotland or Wales and need an education or social care, education or health emergency or prison service

☐ I'm a personal assistant in England employed by an individual to provide care or support to someone with coronavirus

☐ I'm a GP or other healthcare professional who has advised me to get a test

☐ I'm a student returning to university in Scotland

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GOV.UK Get a coronavirus test

What's the name of the person who needs a test?

First name

Last name

Continue

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