



26 September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

COVID-19 - guidance on outbreaks at an educational setting

Since our return to school at the start of the month, we have been working alongside the Public Health team at Hertfordshire County Council, to closely monitor the number of staff and students testing positive for Coronavirus. With the removal of most restrictions, it was expected there would be an increase; schools have been asked to plan contingency arrangements for different levels of infection to reduce disruption to students' education.

This weekend, I have been in touch with the Public Health Team at the Local Authority to discuss a rise in cases at Ashlyns and consider the next steps to address this in line with our Outbreak Management Plan and Risk Assessment. Whilst the number of cases remains below the number we experienced last year, it is important to do all we can to suppress transmission.

In essence, this will mean the re-introduction of some of the protective measures, which were in place earlier this year. Our priority is to take the necessary steps to ensure we keep face-to-face teaching on site and minimise the spread of the virus in our community.

Below, I outline the additional controls we will put in place from Monday 27 September until at least half-term. These will be kept under constant review and we will communicate any changes following a review of cases with the Public Health team.

As always, I appreciate your support in reinforcing the importance of following these safety measures to your children as well as reminding them of the precautions they can take when out of school.

Testing

Before returning to school on Monday 27 September students should undertake a Lateral Flow test if possible. If you do not have access to a test kit this weekend, these will be made available from the school's Aspire to Fitness reception area in the Sports Hall between 12.00 and 17.00 this afternoon.

If your child has been in close contact with a confirmed case(s) they should be contacted by Track and Trace and advised to take a PCR test. Details on how to book a test can be found in Appendix B at the end of this letter. Additional Lateral Flow Test kits will be made available to students for twice weekly testing.

Please remember if your child exhibits any symptoms you should book a PCR test as soon as possible.

Face coverings

From Monday 27 September students who are not exempt should wear face coverings in all communal indoor spaces. Depending on the lesson activity, there may also be occasions when students are asked to wear them in lessons for short periods.

Enhanced cleaning

Cleaning protocols for classrooms between lessons will be reinstated.

Assemblies

There will be no assemblies for whole year groups for the remainder of the half-term.

Visitors on site and larger events

Visitors, who are not exempt, will be required to wear face coverings in communal areas. Activities such as Parent Information events, which involve large numbers of visitors on site, will take place digitally or be suspended for the remainder of this half-term. Separate communications regarding planned individual events will be sent to parents/carers affected by these changes.

Limiting other activities

Other activities such as extra-curricular sport, trips and visits will be risk assessed on an individual basis and communicated directly to those involved.

As always, our priority is to deliver face-to-face, high-quality education to all students in a way which helps to ensure everyone's safety and it is hoped these measures, along with the break over half-term will support the reduction in transmission.

Thank you for your co-operation; we wish those affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) a speedy recovery.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Shapland', written in a cursive style.

James Shapland
Headteacher

Appendix A and B cont.

Appendix A

General COVID information

Symptoms:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – this means they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

If you are not sure whether you or your child's symptoms suggest that they have coronavirus or an everyday cough or cold, you can consult this online NHS symptom checker: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness. If you are concerned about your child's health or the health of anyone else in your household please seek advice from your GP, use NHS 111 online <https://111.nhs.uk/> or call NHS 111.

There are things you can do to reduce the risk of getting COVID-19:

- 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 to your destination
- 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 is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Appendix B

How to book a test online when you have been identified as a close contact but do not have symptoms yourself

- 1) Go to [Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- 2) Scroll down and select **Start now**
- 3) Is the person who needs a test an essential worker? **Select NO**
- 4) Test available - scroll to bottom - **Select Continue**
- 5) Does the person who needs a test have coronavirus symptoms? **Select NO, none of these symptoms**
- 6) Has the person been asked to get a follow-up test? **Select NO**
- 7) Is the person who needs a test part of a trial or government pilot project? **Select none of the above.**
- 8) Why are you asking for a test? **Select I've been told to get a test by my local council, health protection team or healthcare professional. Then Select My local council or health protection team has asked me to get a test, even though I do not have symptoms. Select continue**
- 9) Complete your details and select how you wish to receive your test.