

15/9/2021

Dear Parents,

I want to start by thanking each and every one of you for your co-operation and support over the past two weeks. It has been a very difficult start to the school year given the increase in Covid 19 cases within the community. In spite of the school maintaining the same stringent safety precautions as last year, we did unfortunately have to close several bubbles.

From the 10th September 2021, the guidance regarding a confirmed case of Covid 19 has now changed.

PHA has developed “Frequently Asked Questions” to help explain what these changes mean to parents. These are detailed below:

What should I do if my child has symptoms of COVID-19?

The symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature); OR
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual); OR
- a loss of or change in sense of smell or taste.

If your child has any of these symptoms it is very important that they do NOT attend school and should also [self-isolate](#) at home. You should arrange for them to [get tested](#) as soon as possible. They should continue to isolate until the result of the test is available

What do I do if my child tests positive for COVID-19?

If your child tests positive for COVID-19, they should self-isolate for 10 days and not attend school during this time. The Public Health Agency Contact Tracing Service (PHA CTS) will be in touch to determine who your child’s close contacts are, and will ask for contact details for them so they can be advised appropriately.

Cases will initially receive a text to inform them of the PCR result – it takes a number of hours for these positive results to be transferred to the CTS. The text will be followed by a telephone call by the CTS, this can happen in the 48 hours after you have received the text to inform you of your positive PCR result. Parents can help by familiarising themselves with the process; if their child tests positive for COVID-19 – expect to be contacted by the CTC, recognise our number (028 9536 8888) by adding it to your phone’s contacts, and please answer when we do call.

Parents and guardians will be responsible for informing the school principal of their child’s positive results.

What if my child tests negative for COVID-19?

If your child tests negative for COVID-19 they can return to school as normal, provided they feel well enough to do so. (Holy Trinity are continuing to ask parents to keep their child at home in the event of a positive case **within their household** i.e parents or siblings have tested positive).

What do I do if my child's friend tests positive?

If you do not hear from the PHA CTS, then there is no requirement for you or your child to self-isolate. The PHA CTS will identify all [close contacts](#), and follow them up directly. If your child has been identified as a close contact, then the PHA CTS will make contact with you or your child and provide advice. However, if your child develops symptoms, then they must self-isolate and not attend school, until they have had a negative test.

What is a 'close contact'?

Within a school setting, your child would only be identified as a contact if they have had prolonged close contact with the case (someone who tests positive for COVID-19). This could mean a child in the same household or someone who has stayed overnight. It will also include intimate contact for example, kissing and where a child has received help with personal care in a school. **It does not include all children in the same class or all those who sit next to each other, because the risk of COVID spreading in the school setting is much lower than in a household.**

What will now happen if there is a case of COVID-19 in a school?

Whole classes ('bubbles') will no longer be asked to self-isolate if someone in a school tests positive for COVID-19. There will be no requirement for you or your child to self-isolate unless your child develops symptoms or you are contacted by the PHA CTS.

All close contacts of the case who need to take specific actions will be identified, contacted and advised by the PHA CTS to follow the latest guidance on self-isolation and testing. Usually the following will not need to isolate:

- adults who are fully vaccinated, where 14 days has passed since the second vaccination, who do not have symptoms and who do not develop symptoms and who have not tested positive; and
- children and young people aged under 18 who do not have symptoms and who do not develop symptoms and who have not tested positive.

How will you get close contact information from parents and children?

Parents can help by familiarising themselves with the process - if your child tests positive for COVID-19 you should expect to be contacted by the PHA CTS, recognise our number (**028 9536 8888**) by adding it to your phone's contacts, and please answer when we do call. We are confident we will be able to get sufficient information from cases in the vast majority of cases.

There may be occasions when we will need to contact school principals for further information such as names and contact details. PHA CTS will also ask questions about close contact with staff – for example if a child receives support from a special needs or classroom assistant – similarly contact will have to be made in those circumstances.

As with of any new measure, implementation of these new arrangements will be kept under review and will be refined and enhanced if necessary.

Will you inform the school of positive cases?

No. the PHA CTS will advise that parents should inform the school if their child tests positive for COVID-19.

Under the new arrangements, identification of close contacts is now the responsibility of PHA CTS and, even upon receipt of such information from parents, schools/principals do not need to take any action.

Where parents do inform schools, PHA have made available to schools a 'warn and inform' letter that schools may wish to use to inform parents of cases in the school and to remind everyone of the steps we should all be taking to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in school and beyond.

PHA will continue to keep positive cases number at all schools under review and will provide public health advice and assistance where necessary.

Will the close contact definition apply for all school-aged children now even outside of school settings?

No. Outside of school children will use the same [close contact definition](#) as the general population. These definitions are solely for use within the school setting.

In Summary

CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID 19 IN HOLY TRINITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Where a case of confirmed Covid 19 has been reported in a person who attends our school, **all close contacts of the case will be contacted by the PHA Contact Tracing Service**, where they will give you specific guidance with regard to testing and self-isolation.
2. If you are contacted by the PHA Contact Tracing Service, please follow the guidance that they provide to you.
3. We would ask parents to continue to inform the school if their child, or member of their household, has symptoms or has tested positive. **Please do not send your child into school if your child, or anyone in the household has symptoms. You should book a PCR test immediately and your child should not return to school until they obtain a negative test result.**
4. As soon as we are informed that a positive case of Covid 19 is confirmed within the school, we will inform you via seesaw that a positive case has been confirmed within your child's class and that you may be contacted by the PHA, if your child is identified is a close contact.
5. We will attach an "Alert" letter which provides additional information from the PHA.
6. If a positive case has been confirmed within the class, parents should be alert to their child developing symptoms of Covid 19.
7. If your child has not been identified as a close contact by the PHA, they may return to school as soon as the classroom has been sanitised. We will inform you of the date your child can return to school.

We are continuing to ask parents to keep their child at home in the event of a positive case within their household i.e parents or siblings have tested positive.

This is a very worrying time for everyone but together we will keep everyone safe.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Boyd by telephoning the school or by email fboyd319@c2kni.net.

Thank you

Mrs F Boyd