NHS
Test and Trace

23 September 2020

Dear parents and guardians,

This is an important letter to share some information on how we can work together to make sure we can continue to give children and young people the best education in the safest way possible.

One important part of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of pupils, parents and our communities is testing for coronavirus. We all have a duty to make sure that the right people have access to get tested at the right time. Every time a test is used inappropriately, a person with Covid-19 symptoms may miss out on getting tested.

Therefore, I ask that you all follow these principles:

- You should only book a test if your child has any of these three coronavirus symptoms:

    1. **a high temperature:** any new high temperature where your child feels hot to touch on their chest or back (you do not need to measure the temperature)

    2. **a new continuous cough:** coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours

    3. **a loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste:** a noticeable loss of smell or taste or things smell and taste different to normal

- Your child **does not need a test** if they have a runny nose, are sneezing or feeling unwell but do not have a temperature, cough or loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste because these are not normally symptoms of coronavirus.

- If you are unsure about whether to get a test, please check the official list of symptoms on the NHS website, which is reviewed regularly: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/

- Only the person with symptoms should get a test. You do not need to get a test for anyone else in the household unless they also have any of the three symptoms listed above. All members of the household need to self-isolate whilst waiting for the test result.

- If the person with symptoms' test comes back positive, other members of their household should continue self-isolating for 14 days and **only get a test if they develop coronavirus symptoms.**

- If a pupil in a class or bubble tests positive for coronavirus, anyone who is advised to self-isolate **does not require a test unless they subsequently develop symptoms.**

No one else in the same class or bubble as the symptomatic person needs to take any action unless advised by the school. Schools have detailed guidance and access to a Department for Education and Public Health England helpline for advice and support.

Contacts of a person who has tested positive must follow the guidance carefully and in full, which means they must stay at home for 14 days. This is because it can take several days following contact with an infected person before an individual develops symptoms or the virus can be detected. Students should only book a test if they get symptoms.

The NHS has produced some guidance to help parents understand when their child can and cannot attend school which you may find useful: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

It is vital for children's learning and future opportunities that they are able to return to school and college. It is therefore vitally important that all we work together and do our bit to make this possible.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Viv Bennett CBE

Chief Nurse and Director Maternity and Early Years | Public Health England

Head of World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre for Public Health Nursing and Midwifery

Follow me on Twitter: @VivJBennett

Dr Susan Hopkins

Interim Chief Medical Officer | NHS Test & Trace

Deputy Director | Public Health England

Consultant in Infectious Diseases & Microbiology
Royal Free, London