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Isolating following a positive Covid-19 test result

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing with regard to when and why your child may be asked to isolate following a positive Covid-19 test result at school.

We are all familiar by now with the requirement to isolate for 10 days if you test positive for Covid-19. However, the procedures around isolation for 'close contacts' of those testing positive is less well understood.

What has changed this term?

The introduction of lateral flow device (LFD) tests means that we are likely to have more positive test results. This is because these tests are designed to pick up asymptomatic cases, which previously went undetected. This is beneficial as students are less likely to spread the virus to others.

However, picking up more cases might mean more contact tracing and more close contacts being asked to isolate.

A complicating factor is that LFD tests can also generate a false-positive result, which is why a positive home test **must** be followed up with a PCR test. The procedure around this is as follows:

- The individual receives a positive LFD test.
- They isolate, assuming that it is correct.
- They immediately book a confirmatory PCR (drive in) test.
- If the PCR test is also positive, the individual completes the 10 day isolation.
- If the PCR test is negative, the individual is no longer required to isolate.

The above means that students identified as a close contact may, if the PCR test comes back negative, be allowed back to school.



How do we minimise disruption?

We are asking students to carry out LFD home-tests on the same days each week: **Sunday and Thursday evening before 6.30pm**, and to report these to covid@farmors.gloucs.sch.uk **before 7pm** . This is so that we know when to expect positive cases to be picked up.

When we receive a positive LFD home-test result, **the whole year group will be asked to stay at home** for the next **one or two days**. This gives us the chance to:

- i. Identify close contacts (who will need to isolate for 10 days).
- ii. Receive a confirmatory PCR test result.

The benefit of the whole year group being at home is that we can move to full remote learning, meaning that we are able to offer live lessons and set work immediately.

If a negative PCR test result is received, the whole year group will be allowed back to school.

If a positive PCR test result is received, or there is no test result within 48 hours, the close contacts will be asked to continue to isolate and all other students will be allowed back to school.

No system is perfect, but we believe this approach will be the most manageable, safest, and least disruptive.

Symptomatic cases

In addition to the regular LFD home-tests, we will continue to respond to individuals who become symptomatic and receive a positive PCR test. We could be informed of positive PCR tests **at any time**. We have staff scheduled to respond to such cases in the evenings and over weekends so we can act quickly.

If we are informed of a positive PCR test in the evening or over the weekend, we are likely to ask the whole year group to stay at home for one day whilst we carry out contact tracing.

If we are informed of a positive PCR test during the school day it is not practical to send a whole year group home. Therefore, we will begin contact tracing and may ask parents to pick up their child during the day if they are identified as a close contact. We understand that being called during the day to pick up your child is not ideal. We are balancing the inconvenience with the risks of allowing close contacts to stay in school. There is no easy solution to this.

In summary

Isolation is an inconvenience and is disruptive to students' education. However, it is necessary to keep the virus from spreading.

You may at times question why we have made certain decisions. Please be assured that we consider each decision very carefully and are working hard to manage this complex situation in the best way we can.

When we have a positive case, you can expect:

- Days when whole year groups will be educated remotely.
- Periods of isolation for groups of students.

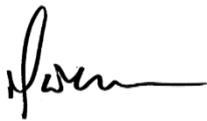
This approach will help keep our community safe and prevent the virus from spreading.

Please support us by:

- Carrying out LFD tests on the specified days at home.
- Following up a positive LFD test immediately by booking a PCR test.
- Notifying us immediately of a positive LFD or PCR test.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Evans', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matthew Evans
Headteacher