Lothian NHS Board

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Public health COVID-19 information to parents/carers, staff and pupils

Dear Parents/Carers,

Thank you for your continued efforts to facilitate the safe return to school for your child/ children.

The measures your school has in place, and the guidance provided by the Scottish Government when your child/children are not in school, are vital for continuing to protect children, staff and you, as parents/carers. Everything you do to follow these measures, will keep the spread of the virus down, and help to ensure the smooth and full reopening of schools.

In addition, as lockdown measures slowly ease and in anticipation of the Easter holidays, we would like to reinforce the following specific messages:

1. Limit gatherings and avoid car sharing

Parents/carers should only allow children to play in small, outdoor groups. Larger gatherings, such as parties, should not currently be happening, even outdoors.

Even though children are now starting to meet more in the school environment, this does not mean they should meet more outside school. Schools have a lot of safety measures, such as hand hygiene stations, limiting mixing of pupils and regular cleaning regimes that reduce risks, which are not as easily followed outwith the school environment.

Although children under 12 are not counted towards households or numbers when meeting outside, working within the ‘spirit’ of the guidance and limiting the mixing of our children is the best way to help us all get back to ‘normal’ as quickly as possible.

2. Close contacts to isolate and get tested

Anyone who is identified as a close contact of someone who tests positive for COVID-19 should self-isolate at home (including isolating from their household members as much as possible) for the full 10 days after being exposed.

Anyone who is identified as a close contact should get tested for COVID-19 (except if they have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days and currently do not have any symptoms), as this may help to identify further cases of the infection, often in individuals who do not have any symptoms. This is important to control the spread of the virus, and protect both people in the school and others in the community.

3. Follow 'FACTS'

Finally, continuing to follow general COVID-19 control measures, such as 'FACTS', will further limit the spread of the virus, and help to keep our schools open and children, families and friends safe.

This includes wearing face coverings, avoiding gatherings (such as at school gates), washing hands regularly (particularly after coughs or sneezes or touching your face), and keeping two metres between you and other people as much as possible both indoors and outdoors.

4. Symptoms – get tested and isolate

And please remember if your child or anyone in your household has one or more symptoms of COVID-19 (a new, continuous cough, a high temperature/fever, or loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste) you should ALL stay at home and get tested. Find out how to organise a COVID test on NHS Inform or phone 0800 028 2816. Please contact your school or local authority if you feel you may need help with self-isolation.

Your continued support and efforts have seen us all through the hardships of the year, but with a little more patience and goodwill, a degree of normality is in sight. By following FACTS and the government guidance, we can all keep our children safe, in school and the virus under control.

F – Face coverings

A – Avoid crowded places

C – Clean your hands regularly

T – Two metres distance

S – Self-isolate and book a test if you have symptoms

Yours sincerely,

Katie Dee

Katie Dee
Interim Director of Public Health and Health Policy