

# Covid-19- Frequently Asked Questions

## How is the self-isolation period worked out?

Children and adults are directed to self-isolate for 14 days from the last point of 'close or proximal' contact with the person that tested positive. In Walbrook class for instance the last contact was on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September. The children therefore should self-isolate until Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October and should not return to school until Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> October.

## What does close or proximal contact mean?

- **Direct close contacts:** Direct face to face to face contact with a case for any length of time, including being coughed on or talked to. This also includes exposure within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer.
- **Proximity contacts:** Extended close contact (within 1-2m for more than 15 minutes) with the person who tested positive.

## Do the family have to self-isolate with the child?

Self-isolation is a precautionary measure to control the virus. Those directed to self-isolate are told they must stay home for a 14-day period. Those directed to self-isolate are given a date they can return to school if they are well. Those self-isolating are not allowed out for exercise. However, **the rest of the family can continue to leave the home as usual. This means that their siblings can continue to attend school.** Parents must of course make sure that the child told to isolate has appropriate adult care at home.

## Have any more children or adults who are self-isolating from a bubble tested positive?

This is a question we are asked by PHE. The answer currently is 'no'. Some adults within the bubbles isolating have taken tests but these have all come back negative.

## Will the whole school be asked to close?

I asked this question directly and was told 'no'. If we have any further positive cases, we need to inform PHE directly and they will do a risk assessment of each case. PHE consider each group that has been required to self-isolate as an individual case given the adults infected have not had close contact across their groups. They are monitoring this with us carefully as we have had more than 2 cases.

## Should the children wear face masks?

No. Children under the age of 11 are exempt from wearing face masks and do not need to wear them in school. However, if parents want their children to wear face masks in school, we will allow this. We ask that you teach children the hygiene standards expected of mask wearers.

## Should staff wear face masks?

I discussed this question with PHE. The current guidance provided by the government does not recommend face covering for primary pupils **or staff** with exceptions in certain circumstances and this continues to be the advice given. However, I informed PHE that given the staff are the people who are becoming unwell, I have requested that they

wear face coverings when in close contact in communal spaces, in offices and when needing to work with other adults in close contact.

I ask parents to remember to stand back when talking to staff at the gates. Some of our staff are anxious about catching the virus and I am permitting them to wear face visors in class. The children are now so accustomed to seeing adults wearing face masks they accept this as normal.

### **Should parents wear face masks?**

If you have an appointment and need to enter the school building, we ask that parents wear a face covering or mask. As there are large groups of parents collecting children to and from school each day, parents could wear a face covering at this time, but we are unable to direct parents to do this or enforce it.

### **Can the school enforce social distancing outside of the school building?**

We cannot enforce social distancing amongst parents outside of school. We are always reviewing the exit and entry arrangements and considering ways to encourage parents to socially distance. We do this in the following ways:

- We have put posters outside of school to remind parents.
- We remind parents in text messages and in the newsletter.
- We have allocated sections in which parents and children should line up and wait when dropping and collecting children.
- We have followed up on any specific concerns raised by parents.
- We have also listened and adopted suggestions made by parents to encourage parents to socially distance.
- Please note: **I have asked Teachers to release children to those parents who are following the rules first.**

However, we rely on parents working with the school and being responsible for their own behaviour.

### **Are visitors permitted in the school?**

We limit visitors to the school wherever possible and many meetings and training sessions take place via online digital methods. We do have specialist music teachers and therapists who attend school to carry out lessons with children. Visitors are provided a pamphlet that they must read setting out the social distancing and hygiene methods that we require them to follow. They must provide their personal details each visit for Test and Trace purposes.

### **Have the staff been using the same staff room as teachers from other years?**

Year groups work separately so we have been able to quickly identify who had direct contact with the infected person for more than 15 minutes. We limit the number of staff sitting and eating in the staff room and are advising staff eat within their classrooms when this is possible or in an outside courtyard. Staff are continually reminded that they should avoid crossing/mixing with other bubbles whenever this is possible. Play time and lunch times are staggered so staff have separate breaks within their bubbles.

### **Can I home school my child? Is this the same as Remote Learning?**

**Home Schooling:** Parents can make the decision to home school children. Home schooling is when children are no longer on roll at a school and the parents organise

education at home. If parents elect to home school their children, they will need to discuss arrangements they are putting in place carefully with the local authority who manage elective home schooling. Children benefit from social contact with other children and we would encourage parents to discuss any anxieties and concerns with the 'back to school' team prior to making this drastic decision.

**Remote Learning:** If a child is **directed** to self-isolate by PHE or is directed to medically shield then the school will provide remote learning. This will include providing paper packs of work and online activities for children to access for the two weeks they are absent from school. The children will not be expected to complete learning tasks if they are unwell. It is expected that most remote learning will be for a two-week period, unless there are special medical circumstances for the child that mean this period may be extended.

### **Can I choose to have remote learning because I would prefer this? What happens if I do not send my child in?**

No - you cannot choose for the school to provide remote learning for your child without direction to do so from NHS or PHE. If you feel you or your child have medical needs that require them to remain absent from school, you should discuss this with your GP. If your child's class is in school, then your child should attend school. The DfE provide a clear directive that we should support parents to do this and we will make referrals to Southwark's 'back to school' team to help parents to do this.

Lisa Salkeld-Townsley is currently managing attendance. She or another member of staff will be in touch to discuss your concerns if your child is absent from school.

### **I am scared that my child may catch the covid-19?**

We empathise with this fear and are aware that many parents are very anxious about children catching the virus. This concern is totally understandable. The medical evidence appears to show that in children, covid-19 is a very mild illness. I cannot offer absolute guarantees that children will not catch the virus, but we are doing everything we possibly can to avoid this happening.