



Friday 10 September 2021

Public Health Agency advice to schools regarding the revised arrangements for the Identification of Close Contacts of COVID-19 cases in Schools

Dear Parent/Carer

You will have heard or read in the news that the PHA issued new arrangements for the identification of close contact of COVID cases in schools. I welcome this change as it reduces the burden placed on school leaders and parents particularly when trying to maintain pupil attendance.

Schools will no longer be required to respond to every COVID-19 case and identify contacts. Instead, the Public Health Agency (PHA) Contact Tracing Service will undertake a more targeted approach and will only contact the school Principal for assistance in certain circumstances. This will help reduce the potential for large numbers of pupils being required to self-isolate and also reduce the amount of time spent by schools contact tracing.

From Friday 10th September 2021, when the PHA Contact Tracing Service (CTS) contacts a confirmed COVID-19 case associated with a school (either a pupil or staff member), they will ask for their support (or that of their parent or guardian) in identifying their close contacts.

Those identified as close contacts by this process will be contacted by the PHA Contact Tracing Service by phone or text, advised they have been identified as **a close contact and directed to advice on self-isolation and testing** (<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-self-isolating>).

Parents are encouraged to inform the school of their child's positive test or identification as a close contact as part of routine absence reporting.

Thank you for your support to date should that be taking your child for a PCR test or self-isolating. To date, we have had small number of positive cases. We will continue implementing our mitigations and ensure that measures are being well-observed.

I have included an 'alert' letter sent by the PHA for your attention.

Next week sees the launch of enrichments and afterschool activities – please ensure your child gets involved. We had an excellent turn out at Badminton club this afternoon!

I will be writing next week to follow-up on uniform and regulations. This has been a very positive start to the new school term.

Yours sincerely

Niall Oliver
Principal