

Our Ref: SST/HBr

Monday 15th March 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Re: March School Update

I hope you are well and staying safe. I have been delighted to see so many pupils return to school and engage straight away with their learning. The maturity that they have demonstrated is a true credit to you as their parents/guardians, to themselves and the school. Equally I have been delighted to see so many pupils in the Secondary Phase engaging with the lateral flow testing process and so many pupils taking the wearing of masks seriously. I would like to update you on a few items, as follows:

1: Update from the Department for Education – Isolating after a positive Covid-19 test:

Please be advised that the Department for Education has stated the following:

‘As schools return to full attendance, we understand parents’ frustration when their child is asked to isolate at home either after testing positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), or because of being in close contact of someone who has tested positive.

However self-isolation is one of the most important things we can do to help stop the spread of the virus and help protect our friends, family and our community. Around one in three people with coronavirus (COVID-19) have no symptoms, and so finding and isolating these hidden cases quickly will help to stop outbreaks before they get a chance to develop.

If your child has tested positive having been tested using a lateral flow device (LFD) test at school, they do not need a PCR confirmation because these tests are done in a supervised environment. Lateral flow device tests are at least 99.9% specific, meaning the likelihood of a false positive is extremely low – less than 1 in every 1,000. PCR testing will always carry a risk of producing false negatives. At the moment, carrying out LFD tests in supervised conditions and not carrying out confirmatory PCR testing means we capture the maximum possible number of coronavirus (COVID-19) infections during the initial return to school period.

Once your child starts testing at home using lateral flow tests, positive results must be followed up with a confirmatory PCR test (as these tests are not conducted in a controlled environment).’

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2: Covid-19 Testing:

As pupils start to test at home the DfE has published [a step-by-step guide](#) on YouTube to support the transition to home testing. CST has been raising the issue of translation of the guidance on home test kits in community languages. [Translated guidance on how to self-test](#) is now available.

The DfE has also recently published two blogs which provide further information on testing for school staff, students and families:

- [Testing for secondary school and college students, their families, and staff](#)
- [Covid-19 testing in schools and colleges.](#)

3: Easter Holidays

The DfE confirmed that schools are not expected to provide educational activities to eligible pupils and students during the Easter holidays. To that effect, the school will close for the Easter recess once the normal school day ends of Friday 26th March. Pupils are not expected to return to school until Monday 12th April.

4: FSM over the Easter holidays

Schools have been told that they do not need to provide lunch parcels or vouchers during the Easter holidays. The DfE has confirmed their expectation that the COVID Winter Grant Scheme is in place to support families and children with food and other essentials outside of term-time and will operate through the Easter holidays. This scheme is operated by local authorities.

5: Contact Tracing Over Easter

The DfE has confirmed that schools need to continue with contact tracing over Easter. Should your son/daughter test positive for Covid over the Easter break then please contact office@thedustonschool.org to make the school aware. Please do note, staff, students, parents and carers only need to inform the school of a positive case where they developed symptoms within 48 hours of being at school. Schools are asked to assist in identifying close contacts and advising self-isolation, as the individual may have been infectious whilst in their education setting. The key points for consideration are:

- Where pupils or staff test positive for Covid-19 during the holidays, having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, schools are not required to take any action. Staff, pupils, parents and carers should follow the contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.

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- Staff do not need to be available for contact tracing duties beyond the first 6 days of the Easter holidays, at which point all positive cases should be dealt with through NHS Test and Trace. This means that where a school ends face-to-face education on Friday 26 March, there will be no need to remain on-call after Thursday 1 April. Whilst we appreciate this sentiment as a school I would still prefer it if you made the school aware of a positive case throughout the whole of the Easter break.
- The DfE Covid-19 helpline and the PHE Advice Service will remain open over the Easter holidays to answer any questions you have about Covid-19.

I thank you for your continued support for the school.

Yours faithfully,



Mr Strickland
Principal

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