

UPDATE: guidance on dealing with illness

The government and PHE have updated their guidance for schools – in an attempt to avoid overloading of the test and trace system.

Although this is annoying (I for one felt that blanket access to testing if in doubt was a lovely safety net) it does actually send us all back to basically relying on our common sense

This is what they have said about NON-COVID symptoms

*As schools and colleges across England return, pupils and students may feel unwell for example with a sore throat, stomach upset or a headache. These pupils and students don't need to book a test **but may need to stay off school or college and seek medical advice through their GP or pharmacist as usual.***

As you can see this is DIFFERENT to what I said on the INSET day. We will be encouraging them to stay at home until they feel better.

This is what they said about COVID symptoms:

To ensure we identify those with coronavirus while avoiding a huge increase in demand for tests from people without coronavirus symptoms, we ask that you recommend to your pupils, students and staff who feel unwell, that they get tested if:

- *they develop one or more of the main coronavirus symptoms:*
 - *a high temperature*
 - *a new, continuous cough*
 - *the loss or change of their sense of taste or smell, or*
- *they are recommended to get tested by a healthcare provider (e.g. GP or nurse)*

*If a pupil, student or staff member develops one or more of the main coronavirus symptoms described above, only they should be tested. There is no need for their households to have a test, unless they are also symptomatic. **Unless a pupil, student or staff member has one of the three main coronavirus symptoms, they should only be tested if instructed otherwise by the local authority, health protection team or their GP.***

Again I am aware that this is different to what I said on the INSET day.

Basically:

- If someone **spikes a temperature** and/or is **coughing continuously** in school (staff or pupil) they will be sent home and advised to get a test. We will request to see the result of the test before they return.
- If someone develops these symptoms at home – they should let us know, stay away, and arrange to get a test

We have already had families volunteering to show us the results of tests they had taken as a precaution.

Runny noses: I've had to make a U-turn on this one too!

A runny nose is NOT a symptom of COVID for anyone (child or adult). Runny noses are very prevalent during the winter months.

This is what I am proposing:

- Any ADULT with a runny nose on site should wear their face-covering when at all possible
- Any child with a runny nose we will REQUEST to the parent that they wear a face-covering

It's just a cold.....

I know it is really hard, but I think we just need as parents and staff fall back on our common sense. The common cold is something we are all used to seeing and experiencing. It's usually better to have a couple of days in bed when it first comes on – but after that one is usually absolutely fine. We will have a better chance of persuading families to keep children off for a couple of days if we let them come back in when they are basically well (even if their nose is running a bit).

We're washing hands and keeping our distance so much more than before hopefully the infections will spread less!

To cough or not to cough.....

Obviously a DRY CONTINUOUS COUGH is a symptom of COVID, and anyway we don't really want anyone with a truly hacking cough in the classroom. Just beware of fakes (some of our older children MAY be getting wise to what will get them sent home!)

Bottom line messages

- Temperature means Test (unless the parent has received alternative medical advice)
- Other symptoms, trust your judgement – if in doubt get a second opinion
- If it is really COVID symptoms stay away/go home and get a test
- If you find yourself reaching for the Calpol or Paracetamol in order to help you get going for the day – STAY AWAY
- In school keep washing your hands, keep your distance, and wear a face covering as often as helps you feel comfortable

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Adapted:.....