



Health Protection Duty Room

Public Health Agency

12-22 Linenhall Street

Belfast

BT2 8BS

Website:- www.publichealth.hscni.net

30/06/2021

St Catherine's Primary School

Barrack Street

Strabane

BT82 8HE

Dear Parent/Guardian,

CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID-19 IN ST CATHERINE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Public Health Agency has been notified of a confirmed case of COVID-19 associated with St Catherine's Primary School. The Public Health Agency has worked with the school principal to undertake a risk assessment and has identified your child as a **close contact**, which occurred on 29/06/2021.

Advice to self-isolate and arrange a COVID test

In line with national guidance, your child should **stay at home and self-isolate** for 10 days from the last contact with the case, which is up to and including **09/07/2021**. Your child must not go to school or any public areas during this time: your child must remain at home.

We now recommend that you **arrange a free PCR test** for your child as soon as possible – even if they do not have any symptoms. You can book a test online at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by phoning 119. When you are booking the PCR test online, under the section 'why are you asking for a test', please select 'I have been told by contact tracers to get a test.' When asked for a code, please enter

2036703I. We are asking you to enter the code as it helps us monitor and assess COVID clusters when they occur. While you should still be able to book a test even if you do not enter the code, it helps us if you do.

Tests can be arranged at your closest testing site or by requesting a postal kit which will be sent to your home address. You can choose whichever option is more convenient for you.

Going for a COVID test is one of the reasons your child can leave home during the self-isolation period. However, they should not use public transport.

Provided your child and everyone else in the household have no COVID-19 symptoms, the remainder of the household can carry on with their normal activities. If your child is well and already has had a positive PCR Covid test within the previous 90 days we do not advise testing. This is because PCR tests can continue to find non-infectious parts of the virus for several weeks.

PCR test results for contacts

The reason for PCR testing of contacts is to find other positive cases as quickly as we can. However this early testing can miss cases who have caught the virus but are not yet infectious – so **even if the PCR test is negative your child should still complete the original 10 days isolation.**

If the test is positive:

A new period of self-isolation will begin for your child, for 10 days from the date of the test. **Everyone in your household must now stay at home and isolate – even if your child has no symptoms.** You will be contacted by the PHA contact tracing service who will identify other contacts and provide you with advice about what to do next. If your child is well at the end of the period of self-isolation, then they can return to usual activities.

If the test is negative:

Your child should still complete their 10 days self-isolation period.

But **if your child goes on to develop symptoms then they will need another PCR test** and everyone in the household should isolate from the symptoms start until you get the result.

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

For most people, especially children, COVID-19 will be a mild illness.

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature and/or
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

If your child develops any of these symptoms, and has not already tested positive for COVID-19 they should remain at home and arrangements made for them to be tested - www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test. You should arrange a test even if they were tested before and that test was negative.

At that time all other household members must also stay at home, not go to work, school or public areas, even for exercise.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19:

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

Further information

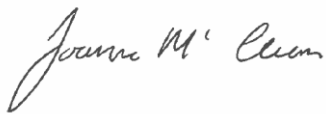
For further information, please see the Public Health Agency website <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus> or contact NHS 111. If your

child feels unwell and you are worried about their symptoms or about anyone else in the home, please contact your GP.

I know that staying at home for a prolonged period of time may be hard for you and your child but it is vital to help reduce the risk of transmission in the community.

Your support is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Joanne M' McClean'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a distinct 'M'.

Dr Joanne McClean

Consultant in Public Health Medicine