Walsall Council

Walsall Public Health & Children's Services

25 September 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

As you will be aware, Walsall schools are working extremely hard to stop the spread of coronavirus (Covid-19). We wanted to thank you for continuing to send your child to school and encourage you to keep on doing so.

We know that there are a lot of guidelines to follow. Especially around what happens if there is a positive case of the virus, testing and isolation (staying at home). To help explain these guidelines, we have attached an 8-step guide. Following these will help keep your family safe and well and help to stop the spread of coronavirus in schools and Walsall communities.

1. If you, your child or anyone you live with has **any** of the following symptoms a new, persistent cough, high temperature or loss of taste and smell, they must stay at home and get tested for Covid-19.

2. If you, your child or anyone you live with **tests positive**, they need to stay home for 10 days from the date of the positive test. Everyone else with will also need to stay at home, but for 14 days.

3. No-one you live with needs to get a test unless they start showing symptoms of Covid-19.

4. If your child **tests negative**, they can return to school once the symptoms have gone and they are better.

If your child has been in contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 and is told to isolate, this means that you need to stay at home.

5. If your child has been told to isolate, because they have been in close contact with a positive case, they need to stay at home for 14 days. They do not need to get a test unless they start showing symptoms of Covid-19.

6. You and the rest of your household don't need to isolate unless your child starts showing symptoms.

7. **Please do not get a private test** these may be unreliable, and antibody tests cannot be used for a diagnosis. Only get a test through the NHS website of dialling NHS 119.

8. Schools should not be asking people to provide evidence of a negative test result before allowing children back into school.

The best way to beat the virus is to:

Encourage regular handwashing, for at least 20 seconds.

Keep your distance i.e. 2 metres, especially outside the school gates, and wear a face covering when on public transport or in places where social distancing is difficult.

Remember, if you or your child are told to isolate, this means staying at home. If you do not isolate when told to do so, new rules mean you could be fined up to £10,000.

We know there have been issues with national NHS testing. The government is working to increase capacity, and the Council has also put in place local measures. By only going for a test if you have one or more of the symptoms will help to make sure those who have symptoms can get a test.

We hope this letter makes things a little clearer, and acts as a reminder to follow the guidelines if you are told to do so. We need your help to beat this virus, by working together, following the guidelines, and doing everything we can to ensure our schools can stay safe and remain open.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Gunther

Director of Public Health

Sharon Kelly

Director – Access and Inclusion