



Milestone Academy
Ash Road, New Ash Green
Kent DA3 8JZ
t: 01474 709420
e: info@milestoneacademy.org.uk
w: www.milestoneacademy.org.uk

Principal: Mr J N Jones BEd (Hons), NPOH

22nd September 2020

Dear Parents & Carers,

I am writing to inform you of a positive case of COVID-19 that we have had in Phase 3 involving a member of staff.

We appreciate that you may find this news concerning but please be assured we have taken steps to act quickly to reduce the risk of cross transmission within the academy and we are working closely with Public Health England to monitor the situation. This letter is, therefore, to inform you of the current situation and provide advice on how to support your child should they have any questions or concerns.

As your child is not in Phase 3 they DO NOT need to self-isolate at the present time. In line with guidance from Public Health England we will be deep cleaning all affected classrooms and communal areas of the school to minimise any risk of your child picking up the virus from a surface around the school.

Public Health England have advised that the children in Phase 3 and any staff that have had close contact with the confirmed case self-isolate for the next 14 days as a precautionary step to prevent them from passing it on to anyone else in the school should they become infectious at a later date.

Public Health England have advised that with these measures the school can continue to **operate as normal** in line with our COVID secure guidelines. We will, however, be reminding all members of the school community that they should continue to monitor for any new COVID like symptoms (no matter how trivial) they may develop.

We appreciate that as a parent you may have a number of questions at this stage and therefore we have put together the following FAQ to help address them. If, once you have read these questions you have any additional comments or questions, please feel free to contact the academy by email and we will respond to your query as soon as possible.

I would like to kindly ask all parents, carers and family members to avoid discussing this case on social media or via Whatsapp groups as this can often create misinformation and increase anxiety unnecessarily. Please be assured that we will contact parents should any aspect of this situation change and therefore you can rely on the academy for any official news.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Jones
Principal



Frequently asked questions for parents

Why is the academy remaining open if there is a suspected/confirmed case?

The advice from Public Health England is that schools can remain open providing that anyone that has been in close contact with a confirmed case self isolates for 14 days. This reduces the risk of cross transmission and means a school can remain open providing it is deemed COVID secure. If a school develops multiple cases where cross transmission is a factor then Public Health England will advise if a partial or full school closure is required.

Is the academy being deep cleaned?

As part of our COVID secure procedures we have put in place additional cleaning routines throughout the day to ensure that high contact areas are regularly cleaned. Each evening the academy is being cleaned more deeply than usual to prevent the virus remaining present on surfaces. As a final precaution where there is a suspected or confirmed case the area affected is isolated and then cleaned in line with guidance from Public Health England. All these measures ensure that the academy does not need to close to be cleaned.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19 that I should monitor my child for?

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

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

What additional measures are the academy taking to prevent COVID-19 from spreading?

The academy has already put in place a series of measures to limit the risk of COVID-19 being spread within the academy. This includes additional hand sanitizer stations on entry to the school and throughout it. We have also put in place more regular and deeper cleaning regimes as well as signage to ensure movement around the school is done in a way that maintains social distancing where possible.

To support social distancing pupils are allocated into class bubbles that are designed to stop the transmission of COVID-19 across the wider academy. Whilst it is not possible to ensure 2m distance at all times the other measures in place reduce the risk of transmission when contact is less than 2m, it is therefore important that pupils regularly clean their hands throughout the day as this is the most important way to control the spread of the disease.

How do bubbles work within the academy?

Bubbles are ways of reducing transmission of COVID-19 by minimising contact between different groups of pupils. Within the academy pupils are organised in phase bubbles which means if there is a confirmed case in one phase it doesn't necessarily impact another.

Within the bubble pupils are encouraged to socially distance as much as is practically possible, however, in a primary class we know that this is not always possible which is why we focus on regular hand washing as the main measure to reduce the risk of cross-transmission.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the bubble your child is in is operating you should contact the academy.

What do I do if my child develops symptoms of COVID 19

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must not come to school and should remain at home for at least **10 days** from the date when their symptoms appeared. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for testing and this can be arranged via <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119. It is important that your child is tested so we can take any further measures needed if they are confirmed to have COVID-19.

All other household members who remain well, must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. This includes anyone in your 'Support Bubble'.

Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

Household members should not go to work, school or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home. Household members staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community. If you are able, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period.

What should I do if my child has been in contact with someone that is self-isolating?

If your child has been in close contact with a person who is a confirmed case we will notify you accordingly and ask your child to self-isolate for 14 days.

If your child has been in close contact with someone that is self isolating as a precaution (and has not yet tested positive) then your child will not need to self isolate as it is most likely that the person who is self-isolating will be infectious whilst they are at home (should they develop the disease).

If my child is asked to self-isolate do they need to keep self-isolating if they receive a negative test result?

If your child is asked to self-isolate because they have been in close contact with a confirmed case they must remain in self-isolation **until the end of the 14 day period**, even if they test negative during the 14 days. This is because even if you test negative you still may incubate the virus later in the isolation period.

If my child is asked to self-isolate should their sibling also self-isolate.

Your other child should attend school at normal. It is only the child in the identified class that needs to self-isolate.

Should I be worried about my child getting COVID-19

For the majority of children and a significant proportion of adults, COVID-19 appears as a mild illness that does not require any specific treatment. If, in the rare case, your child does develop more serious symptoms you should contact 111 for further advice.

What will happen if I do not send my child to school as I am worried they may be infected?

From September, the usual rules on school attendance will apply. Unless you are notified that your child needs to self-isolate they should continue to attend school as normal. If we believe that your child may have had close contact with an infected person and needs to self-isolate we will provide virtual learning to them at home for the period they are self-isolating which they can undertake providing they are well.

How can I help to prevent COVID-19 spreading into my home?

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
- ensure your child washes their hands as soon as they get home
- Ensure that everyone covers their mouth and nose with a tissue or their sleeve (not your hands) when they cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash hands afterwards

How can I help to prevent COVID-19 spreading within the academy?

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the academy you should remind your child of the importance of good personal hygiene and social distancing. You should try and ensure that they wash their hands before leaving home and on arrival back.. You should also try and limit social gatherings outside of school in line with the current government guidance.

Most importantly you should not send your child to school if they have any of the COVID-19 symptoms listed above and instead arrange for them to be tested at the nearest testing centre.