



14 September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Common cold and COVID-19 symptoms – September 2020

Following the return of schools after a prolonged break, it is common for colds and similar viral infections to circulate. In many cases, children will be well enough to attend school and continue their learning with little or no interruption to their education. In other cases, for instance where they have quite a heavy cold, they may need to take a day or two off to recover and to prevent it spreading to their peers. This is probably particularly true in the current situation. I thought it was important to be clear about how COVID-19 symptoms differ from those of other infections that we normally see circulating at this time of year.

COVID-19 symptoms

The main symptoms to be aware of are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour at a time, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

If a young person or a child in your care develops any of the above symptoms, they should self-isolate and you should book them a test as soon as possible at www.nhs.uk or via 119. Please follow the guidance issued last week and let us know if this is the case. Upper respiratory symptoms, like stuffed up/runny nose and sinus congestion, are very uncommon in COVID-19.

Cold-like symptoms

Cold symptoms come on gradually and can include:

- a blocked or runny nose usually with a sore throat
- headaches and muscle aches
- spasmodic coughs and sneezing
- a raised temperature
- pressure in the ears and face
- loss of taste and smell (generally as a result of a blocked up nose)

If a child displays symptoms like these, which present as a common cold, they do not need to be tested and they and you do not need to self-isolate. Your child can still come to school if you are happy for them to do so. Obviously, we would support you in being sensible in making this decision to ensure that we limit the spread of common colds as much as possible.

Home Learning

If a child is asked to quarantine, they will be added to a new 'Home Learning' class. They will then receive English, Maths and Science work on a daily basis. It will take 24 hours for this to be set up. This is ONLY for the small number of students who are quarantined and DOES NOT apply to a whole bubble being told to self-isolate.

Face Masks

Can I politely remind you that face masks are compulsory for all students (unless exempt) and must be washed regularly and any disposable ones should be replaced on a daily basis. This ensure that we are maximising personal hygiene at all times. A new scientific report issued over the weekend is now suggesting that they can minimise the spread by up to 95%!

Thank you for your continued support. We will adhere to all the guidance issued and continue to do all we can collectively to keep the school up and running!

Yours sincerely

Martyn Palfreyman
Headteacher