

Dear all,

Symptoms

The national guidance states that the top three symptoms are cough, high temperature and loss of taste or sense of smell. If these present with any of these symptoms they must self-isolate with their household immediately and book a test.

Guidance, before Coronavirus, has always been if you are unwell and highly symptomatic do not go to school or work if you can, as we do not want colds or Flu equally spreading in these environments.

We are seeing many children test positive who did not have the top three symptoms, most commonly these are severe fatigue (feeling very unwell), sore throat or gastrointestinal symptoms.

Unlike the top three, these symptoms are more likely to be that of a cold, rather than being coronavirus. As such the national guidance is not to test based on these symptoms. You must have a cough, high temperature and loss of taste or sense of smell.

Many people, although not having the top three symptoms have still managed to get tested, and have found out they have had coronavirus and as a result we have taken action in school. As the team supporting schools we want to increase the opportunity for testing in those that do not have the top three symptoms but that is not possible currently.

We would like schools to continue to ask staff and parents that if they are unwell to take action to prevent transmission of illness, and remain at home, if they can, whilst they are presenting strongly with illness.

We are going to spend the half term period reviewing and working with partners to find a way we can increase testing in schools which would create more opportunity to pick up children and staff who do not have the top three presenting symptoms and could have coronavirus.

In summary:

- If you have one of the top three symptoms, self-isolate and book a test.
- If you are unwell – as before Coronavirus - remain home, if you can, whilst highly symptomatic.
- The top three symptoms of Coronavirus are a cough, high temperature and loss of sense of smell or taste. If you have these symptoms it is *very likely you have coronavirus*
- There are more symptoms associated with coronavirus than the top three symptoms. These include severe fatigue (feeling unwell), sore throat or gastrointestinal issues can be the only symptoms exhibited, as such although these are *more likely to be another illness*, these can be a sign of Coronavirus.
- At this time the national system does not permit anyone to be tested, unless they have one of the top three symptoms and you would need to self-isolate whilst waiting for results.



- During half term I will be working hard to see how we can alter testing processes in place around schools so that those who do not have the top three symptoms can be tested.
- We will also be refreshing the school tool-kit and updating social media messaging for our communities.

Best wishes

Liann Brookes-Smith

Public Health