



31<sup>st</sup> August 2021

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Dear Parents/Guardians of Current Arden Students

## Changes to Contact Tracing in Education and Childcare Settings

At the end of July, the Prime Minister announced that changes to contact tracing and self-isolation would take effect from 16th August 2021.

One of the key changes is that education and childcare settings will no longer be asked to conduct routine contact tracing. As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with either the positive case – or in the case of children – the parents, carers or guardian of the positive case to identify close contacts.

NHS Test and Trace already manages the contact tracing process for the rest of society – including children who have recorded a positive PCR test – and has expertise in supporting people to identify close contacts.

This letter sets out in more detail below how that process will work and what you need to do if your child tests positive for COVID-19.

Here are the key changes to self-isolation that took effect on 16th August:

- From 16 August close contacts who are fully vaccinated or those under 18 will not need to self-isolate
- All close contacts will be advised to take a PCR test – you should encourage anyone identified as a close contact to do this
- Individuals identified as close contacts will not need to self-isolate while they are awaiting the results of their test
- If the PCR result is positive, the individual must self-isolate and NHS Test and Trace will work with them to identify any close contacts
- 18-year-olds will be treated in the same way as children and young people until 6 months after their 18th birthday, to allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated. At which point, they will be subject to the same rules as adults

### Self-isolating and taking a test

1. If your child has symptoms, they should self-isolate – and you should inform school. You should immediately arrange a PCR test for them. If the PCR result is negative, they can stop self-isolating (unless instructed to self-isolate for other reasons). If the PCR result is positive, they must self-isolate until 10 days after the onset of symptoms.
2. If your child has a positive result from a lateral flow device (LFD) test taken at home, they should self-isolate – and you should inform school. You should immediately arrange a confirmatory PCR test. If the confirmatory test is taken within two days and



the result is negative, they can stop self-isolating (unless instructed to self-isolate for other reasons). If the confirmatory PCR test is positive they must self-isolate until 10 days after the LFD test.

3. PCR tests can be booked online through the Government's website - <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.
4. PCR test results will be recorded with NHS Test and Trace automatically, but you should also communicate the result to the school during term time.

#### Contact tracing

5. If your child gets a positive PCR test result, NHS Test and Trace will contact you, using the details you registered when ordering the PCR test. You and/or your child will be asked a series of specific questions designed to identify who your child has been in close contact with. Being in an education or childcare setting with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 will not necessarily mean a person is identified as a close contact.
6. You will be asked to provide the contact details, if you know them, of any of the individuals – or their parents or guardians – who have been identified as close contacts. NHS Test and Trace will then get in touch with these close contacts and provide appropriate instructions or advice (see below).

#### Self-isolation and/or testing of close contacts

7. **From 16 August**, if the close contact is under 18, or a fully vaccinated adult they will not have to self-isolate.
8. Close contacts will be asked to take an PCR test immediately, other than for very young children identified as non-household contacts, and they will not need to self-isolate while awaiting the results of the test.
9. If the PCR test is positive, they will be required to self-isolate for 10 days from the date of the test. NHS Test and Trace will then get in touch to identify close contacts (see points 5 and 6 above).

We recognise how difficult the past 18 months have been and the sacrifices that all families, education and childcare settings have had to make. This has been an enormously challenging time for everyone and we would like to take the opportunity to thank you for everything you have done.

Yours sincerely



**Linda Page** - Deputy Headteacher