

NHS Forth Valley

Carseview House
Castle Business Park
Stirling
FK9 4SW

Date 17/01/2022
Our Ref HPT

Dear Parent,

Due to the new Omicron variant, Covid-19 is spreading rapidly across Scotland, including in Forth Valley, and has resulted in a very high number of positive cases being confirmed in our local communities each day. In recent weeks it has been suggested that as many as one person in twenty has been infected with Covid. We can therefore expect most schools will report positive test results amongst staff or pupils. Most of these cases are likely to have been caught in the community. Schools in Scotland are continuing to have effective control measures in place and are considered to be low risk environments. NHS Public Health Services are now concentrating on outbreaks in high risk setting such as care homes and hospitals.

Please follow the guidance in the standard letter below which will now remain in place until there is a significant improvement in the pandemic situation. We will not be issuing further letters unless there is a significant change in the national guidance and you should continue to behave as if you are at risk of being in contact with cases of Covid 19.

In recent days we have been made aware of a member of our school community in S2 who has tested positive for COVID-19. This letter is to inform you that your child has been identified as having been in **'low risk' contact** with this person. This means they may have shared a classroom or had some other low risk contact in school.

There is no need for your child to isolate unless contacted separately by Test and Protect and asked to do so. School remains open and your child should continue to attend if they are well.

The public health judgement that these types of contact are low risk is based on a range of factors, including vaccination rates, evidence about transmission from children and young people, and the low risk of direct health harms to children.

If they develop any **symptoms**, your child must not come to school. They must isolate and you must book a PCR test through www.nhsinform.scot or by phoning 119 if you cannot book online. The cardinal symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of: new continuous cough; high temperature; or a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia).

Please be reassured that for most people coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness. Children are at particularly low risk of illness and, although our understanding of the Omicron variant is evolving, there is no evidence of a higher risk at present. For those people who are eligible, vaccination, including a **booster dose**, is highly effective at preventing severe disease.

Chair: Janie McCusker
Chief Executive: Cathie Cowan

Forth Valley NHS Board is the common name for Forth Valley Health Board
Registered Office: Carseview House, Castle Business Park, Stirling, FK9 4SW

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To help reduce the risk to your family and your school community, please also:

- Ensure your child **takes a one-off lateral flow test / LFD before returning to school**. This can help reduce the likelihood of spread in schools, by catching infections early.
 - There is no requirement for your child to test daily in order to leave isolation.
 - If your child is in primary school, you can support them to take a test before returning if you and they are comfortable in doing so. There is no need for your child to continue to test regularly as part of attending primary school.
 - If your child is in secondary school, they should take a test before returning wherever possible, and continue to test regularly (twice-weekly) thereafter.
 - Free at-home LFD test kits are available for you and your primary-school aged children by collection from COVID test centres or pharmacies, or delivery by ordering online. More information can be found at:
www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested/pages/no-covid-symptoms.
 - Free test kits are available to all secondary school children from the school. Please contact the school directly if they have any problems accessing tests.
 - Please ensure that all test results, whether positive, negative or void, are recorded on the online portal at: www.covidtest.scot OR by phoning 119.
- Ensure everyone in your household is **up to date with their vaccination**, including the **booster**. If you or anyone eligible in your family have not yet been vaccinated or boosted visit www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine. **Vaccination** is our best defence against COVID-19 causing anyone to become seriously unwell.
- Adopt **additional caution** if meeting with friends or family who you know to be at higher levels of risk by e.g. testing before you meet up; wearing a mask; or meeting outdoors.
- Wear a **face covering** in line with guidance, keep your **distance**, keep rooms **ventilated**, and **wash your hands** with soap and water regularly.

You can find more trusted advice on www.nhsinform.scot.

Yours faithfully

Dr Graham Foster
Director of Public Health
NHS Forth Valley

Mr Tom Black
Headteacher