NHSGGC Public Health Coronavirus FAQs – August 2020

General questions

Q. When should a parent take a child for a test?

A. You should take a child for a test if they have any one of the three symptoms of Covid-19. The symptoms are;

- The onset of a persistent cough
- or a temperature/fever
- or a loss of taste or smell.

Only people who are symptomatic should book a test unless you are asked to get a test by Public Health as part of the management of an outbreak in your community.

Q. Can a child who has a cold symptoms, for example, a runny nose, sneezing, still come to school?

A. A child who has any of the symptoms of Covid-19 (a persistent cough, or a temperature/fever, or a loss of taste or smell) should not come to school. The child and their household should self-isolate and arrange for a Covid-19 test. A child who has cold symptoms but no symptoms of Covid-19 does not need to miss out on school if you feel their symptoms are mild and that they are well enough to attend. If they do not have the symptoms of Covid-19 they do not need to have a test.

Q. When should a school ask parents to take their child home?

A. A school should be concerned that a child may have Covid-19 if they have a new continuous cough, or a fever/temperature, or report that they have a loss of taste or smell. If they have any of these symptoms parents should be asked to take their child home. If the child has other symptoms and is well enough to stay in school parents do not need to take their child home.

Q. What would define a continuous cough?

A. A continuous cough is coughing for longer than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours. For people who usually have a cough, it may be worse than normal. A continuous cough will not be a single coughing fit.

Q. If a pupil/ teacher has a negative test can they return to work/ school if their cough/ symptoms persist?

A. If the pupil/teacher is off with Covid-19 symptoms but they get a negative test result they can return to school when they feel well enough. It would not be advised to attend school if you have a fever.

Q. If a parent is not sure whether their child is displaying symptoms of the virus who should they contact for advice?

A. The symptoms of Covid-19 are;

- The onset of a persistent cough
- or a temperature/fever
- or a loss of taste or smell.

If a parent is not sure whether their child is displaying an of these symptoms they can consult the range of information and support available on the NHS Inform website at www.nhsinform.scot or call 111.

Q. If several members of a household have been tested for Covid-19 and only one result has come back and is negative, can that person return to their work/ school or do they have to wait for negative test results for all members of the household/ bubble.

A. Only household members who are symptomatic need to get tested. If more than one household member has symptoms all the results need to be back before a household member can return to school/work

Q. Can schools ask to see a negative test result before children are allowed back in school?

A. Children should only be tested if they have Covid-19 symptoms or have been asked to get tested by Test & Protect. In these circumstances schools may wish to see the negative results and could agree this with parents. Schools cannot insist on this. We would request that schools do not contact Public Health or other health services to do this.

Q. Can we still do tooth brushing with infants?

A. Dry tooth brushing can continue.

Q. Who will have to self-isolate for 14 days if someone who attends my child's school has a positive test?

A. If someone who attends your child's school tests positive for Covid-19 we will first check whether they came to school when they might have been infectious. This would be whilst they had symptoms or in the 48 hours before they had symptoms. The school will then work with Public Health to identify anyone who has been within 2 metres of the person who has tested positive. A close contact will be anyone who has been within 1-2 metres for more than 15 minutes, or, within 1 metre for a short time. The children and staff identified will be asked to self-isolate as a precaution. For further information on this – you could look at the advice document for heads which is being sent to schools and published on line shortly.

Q. Does having regular short contacts which add up to at least 15 minutes or more with someone throughout the course of the day, e.g. in a class setting, mean that you will be asked to self-isolate? Is it only if it is a sustained period of 15 minutes?

A. If you have been within 2 metres of someone for 15 minutes you will, in most cases, be considered a contact. This would only happen when that person has tested positive for Covid-19 and you were in contact with them whilst they may have been infectious. This could be 15 minutes at one time or 15 minutes due to regular shorter contacts.

Q. Why do brothers and sisters continue to attend school if one of child has to self-isolate due to a positive case within their class at school?

A. Only the staff or children who have been in direct contact with the positive case need to self-isolate as a precaution. Brothers and sisters of children who have been asked to self-isolate have not had that same direct contact so do not have the same risk. This is why brothers and sisters can continue to attend school. If the child who has been identified as a contact develops symptoms, then the brothers and sisters, and anyone else in the household should isolate while waiting for test results.

Q. If young people are wearing a face covering and they are next to someone who then tests positive does this mean they don't have to self-isolate?

A. No. Face masks and cloth face coverings available to general public reduce the risk of spread of Covid-19, but they do not prevent it completely. The young person will still be required to isolate as a precaution if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive.

Q. Why do Test and Protect sometimes advise for a whole class to be sent home and on other occasions it is only named individuals who have to self-isolate?

A. Test and Protect will work with the school to identify pupils and staff who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive. This will include those who have been within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes, or for a shorter time within 1 metres. The number of people who are asked to self-isolate as a precaution will be different each time. Each situation will be carefully assessed every time.

Q. If a teacher works across several classes (ie NCCT teacher, School Management team) would all classes she/he has been in contact with have to isolate if that teacher tests positive?

A. If a teacher tests positive all close contacts will be identified. If they have worked across several classes when they may have been infectious all staff or pupils that the teacher was in close contact with would be identified as a precaution. This would not necessarily be a full class. It would include those pupils who had been within 2 metres of the teacher for more than 15 minutes, or within 1 metre for a shorter length of time.

Q. If a teacher or child is a close contact and is asked to self-isolate, can they return to school if they have a negative Covid-19 test?

A. If the pupil or teacher is off because they have been identified as a contact of someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 they need to isolate for 14 days. Test and Protect will advise them when they can return to school. A negative test result does not shorten this period of isolation. They should only get a test if they develop symptoms of Covid-19.