



Director of Children's Services: Helen Budge

Children's Services

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All Parents and Carers

If calling please ask for
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Our Ref: HB/RC/af/H30/C-19/Cor/027
Your Ref:

Date: 07 January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

Arrangements for the start of term three, January 2022: Summary of changes from 6 January 2022 on self-isolation following the First Minister's announcement on 5 January 2022

I am very pleased that so many of our children and young people have been able to return to their school or early learning and childcare setting on Thursday 06 January 2022 for the start of term three of session 2021/22.

I thought that I would write to you again, although I wrote on 5 January on the existing COVID-19 mitigations and measures which have continued to be in place in all schools in Shetland Islands Council at the start of this new term.

The First Minister made an announcement on 5 January 2022 which included changes to self-isolation from 6 January 2022. I thought it would be helpful to provide you with the Self-Isolation FAQ's which we have been provided with following the announcement.

This includes three questions which were raised following the announcement and have been added to the FAQ's attached.

Are these changes retrospective to people asked to isolate prior to 6 January?

- No – anyone asked to isolate before 6 January should continue to follow the advice they given at the time they were asked to isolate.

If I am daily testing after being exempt from isolation as a critical worker under the CNI scheme, what guidance should I follow?

- The Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) exemption scheme will close on 6 January and replaced by the population wide isolation guidance. However, if you were daily testing after being asked to isolate before 6 January and exempt from isolation to attend workplace you should continue to test and follow the CNI guidance until the end of your isolation period.

If I have a positive LFD test but I have Covid symptoms, should I take a PCR test?

- Yes, people with Covid symptoms should continue to take a PCR test, regardless of whether or not they have a positive LFD. People who test positive on an LFD but have no Covid symptoms should treat that as a positive test and follow the isolation guidance that applies to them.

I am aware that for those who were self-isolating prior to 6 January this now provides the clarity that they do indeed have to continue to isolate as discussed with track and trace. As I have been contacted for clarity I thought it may be helpful to provide this information to all parents and carers.

All of these mitigations we have in place in schools are designed to limit the potential spread of COVID-19, particularly with the current prevalence of the more contagious Omicron variant. I want you to be reassured that we are adhering to guidance as it comes out and where there is further clarification we are informing and working with our schools to keep everyone safe.

In addition all secondary pupils are strongly advised to continue with a Lateral Flow Test regularly, at least twice weekly.

Schools have previously provided lateral flow test kits to secondary aged children and young people, which can be used for these purposes. If you do not have test kits, you can access them in a range of different ways, including ordering online for home delivery, or collecting kits from your nearest test site or pharmacy. Further information is available at: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): getting tested in Scotland - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/topics/coronavirus/covid-19/getting-tested-in-scotland)

This approach to lateral flow testing is designed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks.

I know as we start the new school term, you will continue to be vigilant to the symptoms of COVID-19 within your family household:

- A high temperature or fever;
- A new continuous cough;
- A loss of, or change in sense of smell or taste.

If anyone in your family household develops any **symptoms** of COVID-19, they must not come in to school – they should request a PCR test as soon as possible, and your whole family household should stay at home until the test result comes back.

PCR tests can be ordered using the online form available via the NHS Shetland website homepage: www.shb.scot.nhs.uk

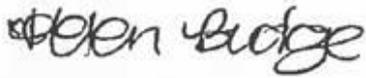
This form is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, and will be picked up by the testing team as soon as possible. If you are unable to access the online form, you can contact a dedicated phone line 01595 532 030 between 9 -12.30 and 2–5pm Monday to Friday.

In the event of a confirmed case(s) of COVID-19 connected to a school or early learning and childcare setting, officers in Children's Services, the school's Head Teacher and colleagues in Public Health will continue to work closely to assess the situation and clarify next-steps, communicating regularly with all the setting's parents and carers.

Thank you for your ongoing support over the last 22 months with the challenging COVID-19 context all of our schools and early learning and childcare settings have been working in, and I do hope that the term can continue without much further disruption.

I hope that you find this additional information helpful and I really appreciate everything you are all doing to ensure we are kept safe. It is really good to have all our schools and early learning and childcare settings open and delivering education to your children and young people.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Budge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small circular mark at the beginning of the first word.

Helen Budge
Director of Children's Services