



# Back to School Parents' Update 25<sup>th</sup> August 2021



Dear Parents,

As you know, I've been trying to give you useful information to help you plan your child's return to school. Both the Department of Education (DE) and the Public Health Agency (PHA) have been slow in getting their guidance out to schools. As of this afternoon, I now have both.

Here are some of the most important points from the PHA's Guidance and it will affect us at school:

- Cregagh PS will continue to operate classes in protective 'bubbles' which reduces the amount of interaction between children from different year groups while in school. This will be reviewed every 6 weeks.
- **Someone has Covid symptoms** – stay at home. Book a PCR test (at a Covid test centre). Self-isolate until results are known and share results with school.
- **In the event of a positive case of Covid being confirmed in a pupil or member of staff** – school will need information from parents to allow identification of the close contacts, and depending on that information, a small number of pupils and/or staff may need to get a PCR test (at a testing centre) and/or self-isolate for a period of time. This will vary depending on whether the close contacts are staff or pupils, their age and vaccination status.
- As we did during 2020-21, where a pupil has been tested, Cregagh PS will be asking all parents to **send proof of their negative test result** (photo or screenshot) before the child is allowed to return to school. Proof should now be emailed to: [info@cregaghps.belfast.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@cregaghps.belfast.ni.sch.uk)
- Current PHA guidance is clear that in a case where the individual is symptomatic (feeling unwell), the first day of symptom onset is counted as 'Day Zero' (the first day of being potentially infectious for a 10-day period). In a circumstance where an individual tests positive but had no symptoms, the 2 full days prior to the PCR

test being taken (not the date of the result) will be counted as 'Day Zero'. The current 10-day self-isolation period starts the day after Day Zero.

- If someone is double-vaccinated or has had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days, their response to being notified of being a Close Contact will be different from others. Ring your GP and school for advice on how to proceed if this describes your child's situation.
- **Who is a "Close Contact" in a school setting?** In the context of a case in a school, a close contact is anyone who has been close to a confirmed case of COVID-19 from 2 full days before the person was symptomatic to 10 days after the onset of symptoms (i.e. the infectious period) and fulfils any of the following:
  - lives in the same household
  - has been within one metre and had face-to-face contact (including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation)
  - skin-to-skin contact
  - been within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day)
  - has travelled in a small vehicle with the case travelled in a large vehicle / plane near the case
  - In primary and special schools in most situations the entire class will be identified as close contacts and as such, will have stop attending school and be PCT tested unless they have had a positive PCR test already in the last 90 days (proof required if not previously received).

## Other Restart news ...



- **P1-5 children** will enter/leave school using our new entrance/exit situated at the back of school along the path that joins North Bank and South Bank. The outer yellow gate will not be opened until 8:45am, so please do not come and congregate much before that time. Remember, school does not start until 8:55am, so not everyone has to arrive at 8:45am.
- The area at the back of the Community Centre will be locked and will not be accessible for parents taking younger children to Preschool; so parents cannot walk through the school grounds on their way to Preschool. They will have to walk back out and around. Health, safety and security!
- Remember that we will not be closing early on Wednesdays (P4-7) like we did last year. We are returning to our normal Wednesday finish of 3pm for our older pupils.

Despite ongoing restrictions, we look forward to a great year ahead!

Yours sincerely,

*Daniel Niggerty*