



03 January 2022

Dear Parent / Guardian,

We look forward to welcoming our students back to school on **Tuesday 04 January 2022** and wish them health, happiness and success for the new year and new school term.

During this current phase of the pandemic and high levels of community transmission, we wish to reassure you that all existing Health and Safety measures remain in place and remind students that strict adherence is required to the following:

- Designated Entry / Exit Points
- One-way System
- External Circulation Routes
- Social Distancing
- Hand Sanitising
- Good Hand Hygiene throughout the day
- Face Masks throughout the day (unless an exemption applies)
- Face Masks on Public Transport
- Good Respiratory Hygiene: "Catch it, Bin it, Kill it!"
- Cleaning of Shared Spaces
- Desk / Surface Sanitising
- Lateral Flow Device Testing – twice per week.

Following recent communication from the Department of Education (see nidirect.gov.uk), please note the following revision to guidance:

Close Contacts of Covid-19

If you are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, self-isolation and testing requirements will depend on whether you are fully vaccinated, your age and where you work.

Reminder of Close Contact Definition (see nidirect.gov.uk) A close contact can be:

- *anyone who lives in the same household as someone with COVID-19 symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19 or*
- *anyone who has had any of the following types of contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 with a PCR test:*
 - *face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within one metre*

- *skin-to-skin physical contact for any length of time*
 - *been within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact*
 - *sexual contacts*
 - *been within two metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day)*
 - *travelled in the same vehicle*
 - *travelled in the same plane*
- **Fully-vaccinated close contacts of a positive case will no longer be required to take a PCR test.**
 - **Fully-vaccinated close contacts and school aged children (including children of primary school age) and young people who are not fully vaccinated who are close contacts** are advised to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test as soon as possible and continue to take daily lateral flow tests until the tenth day after the last date of contact with the positive case. **If this is negative you can stop isolating** but should continue to take daily lateral flow tests until the tenth day after the last date of contact with the positive case.
 - The lateral flow should ideally be taken before you leave the house for the first time each day.
 - **If any lateral flow test is positive you should isolate immediately and book a PCR test.**

Adults who are not fully vaccinated

If you are aged 18 and over and you are either unvaccinated, have had one dose only, or if it is less than 14 days since your second dose:

- *you should **self-isolate immediately** for 10 days following last contact with the positive person*
- *you do not need to book a PCR test unless you develop symptoms.*

If you are symptomatic

- Any person who is symptomatic should follow health advice on testing and not come into school until cleared to do so. **If at any time you develop symptoms, you should isolate immediately and book a PCR even if the lateral flow test is negative.**

Self-isolation for Positive Cases

- The NI Executive has also announced a change to the rules on self-isolation for positive cases, reducing the period from 10 days to seven, providing the individual has negative LFD results on both days 6 and 7 with tests taken 24 hours apart.

- **You should only end your self-isolation after you have had two consecutive negative LFD tests which should be taken at least 24 hours apart.** You should stop testing after you have had two consecutive negative test results.
- **You can end self-isolation as long as you do not still have a high temperature.** If you still have a high temperature, you need to continue to self-isolate until your temperature has returned to normal for 48 hours.
- **You do not need to continue self-isolating for more than seven days if you only have a cough or loss of sense of smell/ taste,** as these symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.
- This guidance also applies to children and young people who usually attend an education or childcare setting.
- All of the above guidance summary points can be viewed at www.nidirect.gov.uk

Ahead of the new term beginning, the Department has strongly urged all staff and post-primary pupils to take a lateral flow test before returning to school. We ask all persons to test (Monday 03 January 2022) and following this, we will resume our twice weekly testing each Wednesday and Sunday.

It is hoped that this summary provides clarification on the updated Covid-19 Health and Safety guidance. Please contact the school office each morning to inform of your daughter's absence or if you have further queries regarding this guidance.

On behalf of the staff at Loreto Grammar School, I wish you and your families God's blessing for a healthy, safe and happy new year.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Susan Cullinan (Principal)