

12<sup>th</sup> December 2021

## **ADDITIONAL PCR TESTING AS PART OF COVID-19 CLUSTER INVESTIGATION**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Public Health Agency has been notified of a number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Artigarvan Primary school community. We are working closely with the school principal and management team to review all the cases and undertake a risk assessment in the school. All those who were high risk close contacts of the cases have been identified, advised to self-isolate and get a PCR test.

Even though the school is taking other actions to reduce transmission, we are investigating the cluster to reduce the risk of further spread. To help with this we would like to find out if other students who have not already had COVID-19 recently might also be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19.

**If your child has had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days AND has no new symptoms, you do not need to take any action.** We do not advise retesting in recently infected people who are well, because PCR tests can continue to find non-infectious parts of the virus for several weeks.

**We are asking pupils in P6 class at Artigarvan Primary school to undertake a PCR COVID test if they have not had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days.**

***Improving Your Health and Wellbeing***

While waiting for the result of the PCR test, your child should remain at home. This will also allow the school the opportunity for any additional cleaning

needed. If the PCR test is negative, your child can return to school. If the result is positive, this means they have the infection and they should self-isolate for 10 days, in line with advice for confirmed cases. Please see [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): self-isolating | nidirect](#) for guidance on whether other people in your household also need to self-isolate if the PCR result is positive.

### **The test**

The test will involve taking a nose and throat swab, which is done by gently rubbing a soft cotton swab on the tonsils and up one nostril. This is a self-test although younger children will need help carrying out the test. Instructions will be provided. However, we would recommend that you visit the PHA website for detailed instructions and a video showing how to do the test.

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/testing-and-tracing-covid-19/testing-covid-19>

### **How to book a PCR test**

You can book a test online at [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or by phoning 119. When you are booking online, under the section 'why are you asking for a test', please select 'I have been told by contact tracers to get a test.' When asked for a code, please enter **2016068G**. We are asking you to enter the code as it helps us monitor COVID clusters. You should still be able to book a test even if you do not enter the code, but it helps us if you do.

You can choose your closest testing site or by requesting a postal kit which will be sent to your home. Going for a COVID test is one of the reasons your child can leave home during the self-isolation period, however they should not use public transport. Please order a postal test if you do not have private transport to a test site.

### **What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19**

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of a new continuous cough and/or a high temperature and/or a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell. [Symptoms - COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) Northern Ireland \(hscni.net\)](#)

**Please book a free PCR test, even if an earlier one was negative.** Your child should stay at home and self-isolate until you receive the result. Please see [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): self-isolating and close contacts | nidirect](#) for guidance on whether other people in your household also need to self-isolate while you are waiting for your child's PCR result.

### **Help stop COVID-19 spreading**

If you or your child are eligible, getting your free vaccination and taking part in regular lateral flow if that is offered to you will help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19. More information on protecting yourself and your family is available at: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): keeping your household safe from COVID-19 | nidirect](#)

I know that organising tests and staying at home waiting for results may be hard for you and your child but it is vital to help reduce the risk of transmission in the community.

Your support is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Bergin'.

**Dr Stephen Bergin**  
**Director of Public Health (Interim)**