

National toolkit for the managing cases and outbreaks of coronavirus in schools

This toolkit, agreed by Public Health Scotland and COSLA, details the measures that should be taken in response to a single test positive case or an outbreak of Coronavirus involving education staff and children. A COVID-19 outbreak is defined in the guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020 as two or more linked cases of a disease within a specific setting over a period of 14 days.

This toolkit is intended to ensure a consistent approach is taken to the management of cases or outbreaks across Scotland, whilst acknowledging local practices will vary to meet local needs and situations, and that each case or outbreak will have specific factors which will be considered by the Health Protection Team in conjunction with Local Authorities, when determining the best course of action.

Information is included on how the response to a suspected or actual Coronavirus outbreak should be managed and the support available.

Local Health Protection Teams (HPT) within the NHS will lead the management of the incident or outbreak and will be involved in providing advice and support to Local Authority Chief Executives, Directors of Education, Head Teachers and Establishment Managers.

Relevant publications

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-preparing-start-new-school-term-august-2020-version-3/>

COVID-19 – guidance for non-healthcare settings

<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): getting tested in Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested/pages/arrange-a-test/>

Sector Advice Card: Schools

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2020/08/scottish-covid-19-workbook-2020/documents/covid-19-sector-advice-card/covid-19-sector-advice-card/govscot%3Adocument/covid-19-sector-advice-card.pdf>

Useful links

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-general-advice>

Coronavirus information

What is coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?

The disease COVID-19 is caused by a new strain of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that was first identified in Wuhan City, China in December 2019. Symptoms range from mild to moderate illness to pneumonia or severe acute respiratory infection requiring hospital care. Death is an important outcome most commonly experienced in the elderly. COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation on 12 March 2020.

What are the typical signs and symptoms of COVID-19?

The key COVID symptoms are:

- new continuous cough and/or
- fever/high temperature and/or
- loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste

For most people, the symptoms of COVID-19 will be mild. Some people, however, will have more serious symptoms, including pneumonia or difficulty breathing, which might require admission to hospital.

How is coronavirus spread?

There are two routes by which COVID-19 can be spread:

- Directly: from close contact with an infected person (within 2 metres) where respiratory secretions can enter the eyes, mouth, nose or airways. This risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.
- Indirectly: by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching own mouth, nose or eyes. Under most circumstances, the amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surfaces is likely to have decreased significantly by 72 hours.

How can spread be prevented?

A range of public health measures are used in non-health care settings to try and control transmission of SARS-CoV-2. These include physical distancing, improved personal hygiene – regular handwashing, symptom vigilance, face coverings, and increased environmental cleaning. The Test and Protect programme, which includes contact tracing, has been implemented to maintain a sustained reduction in new cases, outbreaks and to reduce transmission.

Staff, parents, visitors or children **should not** enter the school if they:

- have developed COVID-19 symptoms or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or

- are from the same household as someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or
- have been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19
- returned from a non-exempt country and need to complete 14 days of quarantine.

A close contact is someone who has been physically close enough to the confirmed case for a long enough period of time, that they may have had the virus transmitted to them. Close contacts will be informed of this by the Test and Protect contact tracing team.

It is important to note that physical distancing is a key intervention throughout the course of the school day and relates to staff break and lunch areas as well as car-sharing and transport. Face coverings should be used when 2m cannot be maintained between staff and between staff and pupils. Parents must also be reminded about ensuring physical distancing at the school gates.

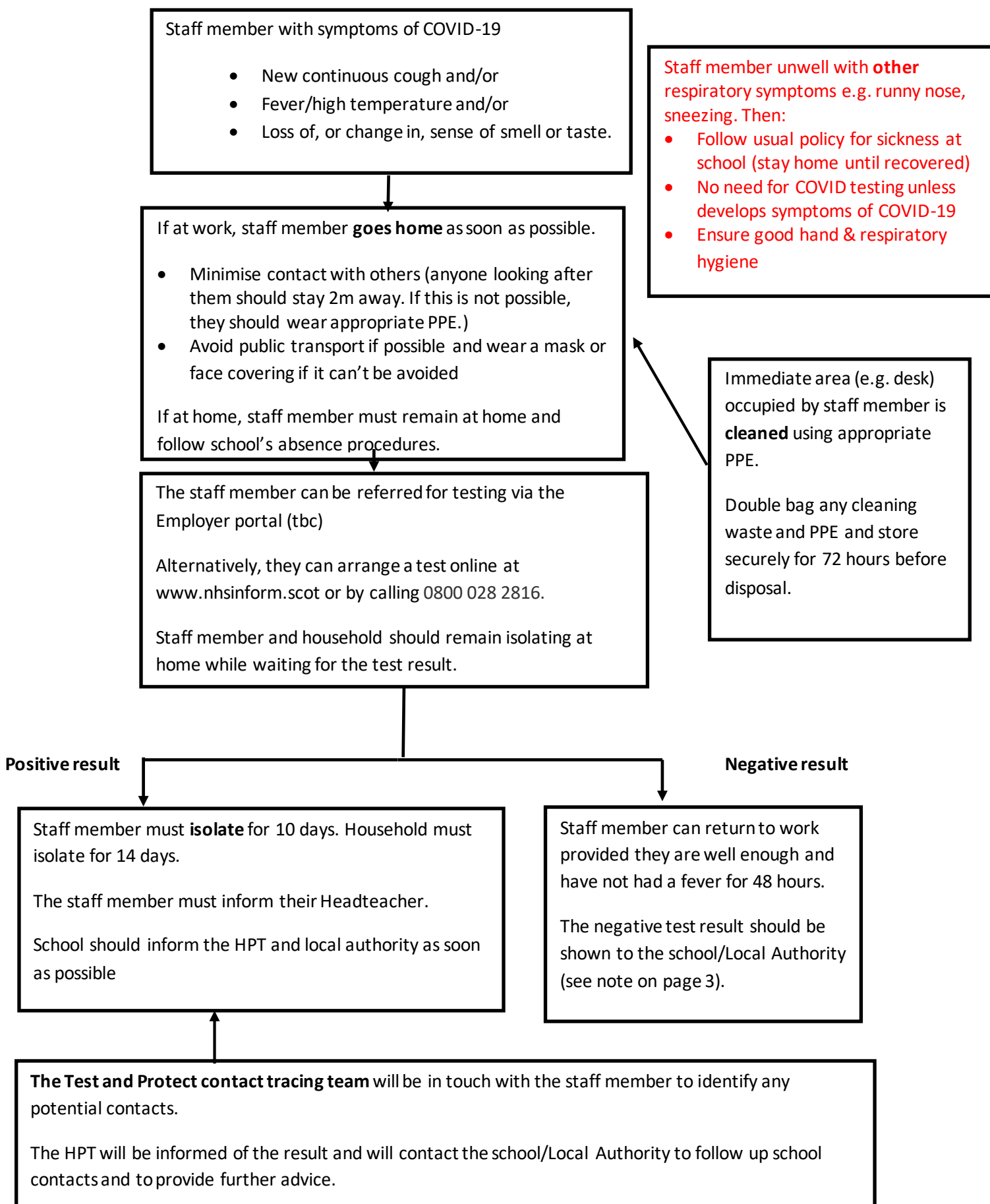
The local HPT will be notified of any positive cases in complex settings (e.g. schools, nurseries) and will be in touch to offer support and advice to the establishment. Contact details for local HPTs can be found in annex E of this document.

- **Note** in relation to schools being informed about test results: Schools have a legitimate reason to request information from individuals (parents/carers, pupils or staff) however, the provision of healthcare information to schools is voluntary. Legal advice is being sought, however, indications are that local and/or national public health departments can provide advice to schools to protect individual pupils or the wider school community. The organisations' sharing the information would be required to ensure they have, or put in place, data sharing agreement/s with the necessary protections and paperwork to ensure that only those with a legitimate interest can see that info and only for the specified purpose.

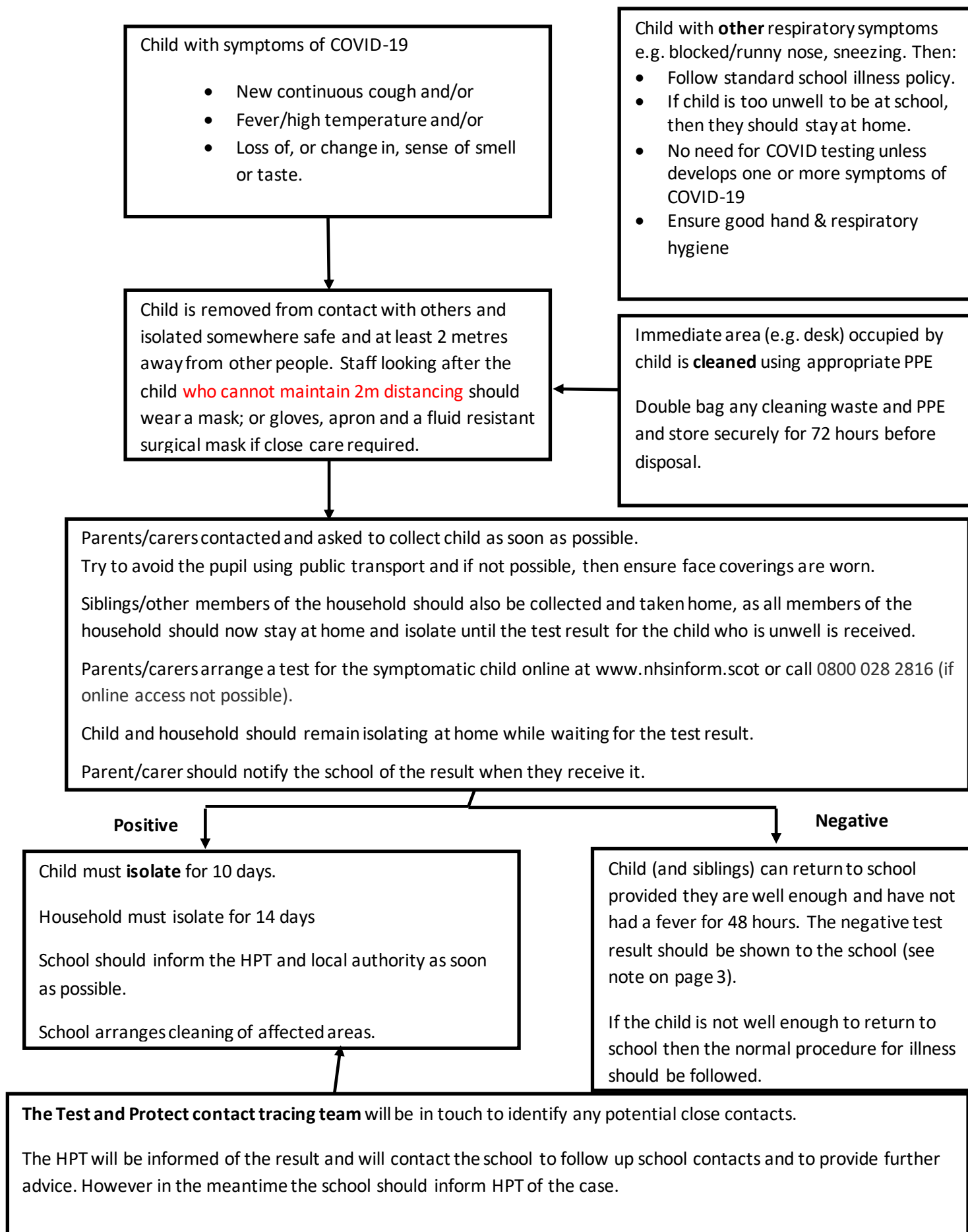
A "bespoke" set of mitigations applies in schools, in particular with regards to grouping and physical distancing (esp. in secondary schools), the use of face coverings, testing access and good environmental and hand hygiene. The recommendations in the schools guidance should form the basis for initial discussions between local HPTs and schools.

What to do if someone develops symptoms

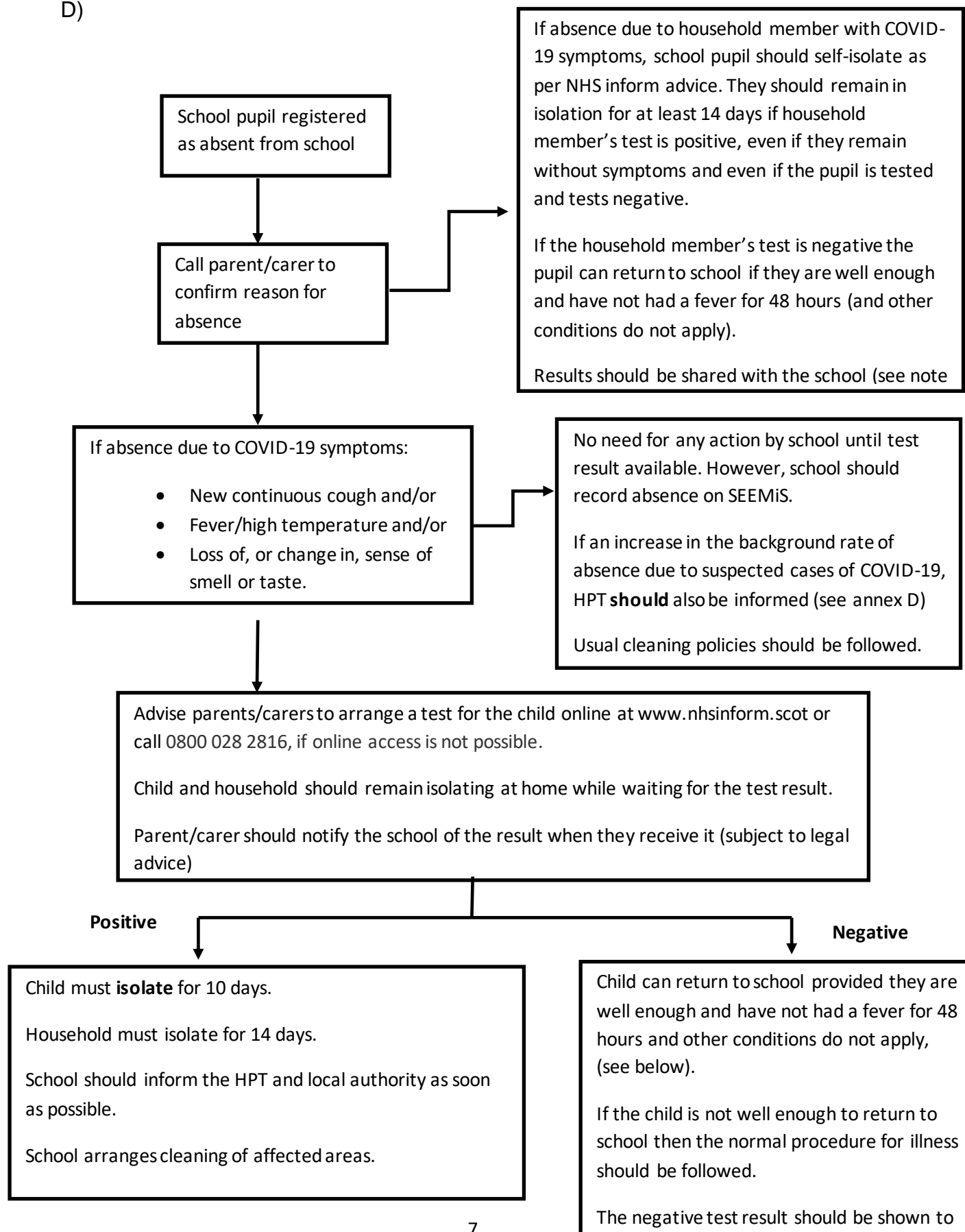
Section A: Staff member with symptoms of COVID-19 (checklist Annex B)



Section B: Child with symptoms of COVID-19 at school (checklist Annex C)



Section C: Child who does not attend school/reports an absence (checklist Annex D)



Section D: Actions following results of test

If a staff member, child or young person **tests negative** they can return to school provided (1) they are well enough (according to the school's sickness policy), (2) have not had a fever for 48 hours (without the use of antipyrexials, e.g. paracetamol) and (3) they have not been identified as a close contact of a positive case, and (4) are not undergoing quarantine from travel abroad to a non-exempt country.

If a staff member, child or young person **tests positive** they will be required to isolate at home for 10 days. Their household contacts must isolate for 14 days. Other close contacts will be identified via the Test and Protect process and will be contacted by the contact tracing service for this. The HPT will be informed of any positive result in a child or staff member **after** the contact tracing service has identified where the positive cases work or attend school.

As this process can take time the school may be informed of the positive result before the HPT is aware. The school/Local Authority must contact HPT if they are informed about a positive result (contact details are contained at annex E).

Schools/Local Authorities should inform the HPT of:

- all confirmed cases of COVID-19 as they arise
- any suspicion of a cluster of cases of COVID-19 in the school of either suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19
- an increase in the background rate of absence due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 or other organism, e.g. norovirus (this does not include absence rate due to individuals shielding or self-isolating as contacts of cases).
- if there is a general increase in respiratory illness in the school – whilst this may be due to other infections such as influenza - schools should be alert to the possibility this could be due to COVID-19.

Schools/Local Authorities **do not** need to inform HPT of single suspected cases. However should follow appropriate reporting processes to their local authority.

The HPT will provide support and advice to the school in the event of a test positive case or an outbreak. When the situation requires it, the HPT will form an Incident Management Team to lead and manage the response to the situation.

Health Protection Teams and local authorities will work together on any public communications around cases, contact tracing or outbreaks.

Annex A: Possible COVID-19 scenarios in schools (or similar) educational settings (FAQs)

If a positive case of COVID-19 is identified in the school, do shielded staff members or vulnerable groups need to go back into self-isolation?

If there is a positive case in the school of COVID-19, there will be a risk assessment by the local Health Protection Team to identify any close contacts of the case (whether shielded or vulnerable or not) , risk to others and to advise if anyone needs to stay off school. The health protection team will also advise the school if any shielded or vulnerable people need to stay off school. Similarly, if there is an outbreak in the school, the health protection team will review the situation and assess if it is still safe for shielded/vulnerable staff or children to stay at school.

If cross regional lockdowns are put in place, for example a lockdown in Midlothian, would staff who work in schools in Edinburgh but live in Midlothian still be able to attend their school to work?

Yes, as long as they have no symptoms or have not been identified as close contacts. School staff are keyworkers and so will be able to attend for work even if the region they live in is in lockdown. However, they should take extra precautions when going outside in the region they live in (e.g. to shops) and closely follow the guidance by avoiding contact with other people outside their household, washing their hands regularly and adhering to physical distancing. They should also continue to follow the advice that if they have any symptoms of COVID-19 they should stay at home, self-isolate and get tested.

One positive case is identified in a high school and one case in a feeder primary school

A risk assessment will be undertaken by the health protection team to determine if there is any link between the cases in the high school and feeder primary school. The risk assessment will consider movement of staff and pupils between the schools to determine the possible risk of spread of infection. Based on this risk assessment, the appropriate actions required to manage the situation will be determined, including infection control measures (such as cleaning) and whether any staff, pupils or classes should be advised to stay at home. The health protection team will consider whether an incident management team (IMT) should be formed to co-ordinate the response.

If a staff member or pupil (or their guardian/parent) refuses testing or declines to share their test result with the head teacher?

A discussion should be attempted to advise of the benefits of testing when symptoms arise, both for themselves and the wider community to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. If they still refuse, they need to be treated as if they are positive for COVID-19 i.e, they should be

advised to stay off school and stay at home for at least 10 days, and the people they live with should also be advised to self-isolate for 14 days. If they refuse to listen to this advice and continue to try to come to school, the school should notify their local authority and get in touch with the Health Protection Team.

A staff member has COVID-19 symptoms and tests negative

If a staff member or pupil has COVID-19 symptoms but tests negative, this should not be used as reassurance that the individual concerned does not have COVID-19. The test is evidence of viral presence only at the time it was taken. They may even have another virus or infection causing their illness and so should stay off school until they are well and at least 48 hours fever-free (without the use of antipyretics, e.g. paracetamol). If they remain concerned about COVID-19, or are more unwell, they should contact NHS 24 (111) for further advice, and a clinical assessment if needed. If there are urgent concerns they should contact 999 in an emergency as usual.

Increase in pupils/staff reporting symptoms of COVID-19

Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 should be advised to self-isolate and get tested. Their household members should also be advised to self-isolate at home until the test result is available. If the school is concerned about a number of staff/pupils going off with symptoms of COVID-19, this should be escalated to the local education authority who will involve the Health Protection Team to further assess this situation and decide on next steps to be taken. The school will be involved in these discussions.

A school transport operator tests positive

If a school transport operator tests positive for COVID-19, the Health Protection Team will be involved and a risk assessment carried out to determine the risk to anyone on the bus and what infection control measures were in place between the driver and the pupils/other staff members e.g. a screen. Based on this risk assessment, the Health Protection Team will decide the appropriate actions to manage the situation, which will include asking about symptoms, infection control measures (such as environmental cleaning) and whether anyone on the bus needs to self-isolate as a precautionary measure.

One of the catering staff tests positive for COVID-19

The staff member will be advised to self-isolate and anyone who is identified as being a close contact of the person by the Test and Protect team (e.g. face to face contact with the positive person, or within 1 metre for longer than 1 minute or within 1-2 metres for longer than 15 min) will also be advised to self-isolate. A risk assessment will also be carried out to determine if any further actions are required and if a further review of the school premises by an environmental health officer is required.

Pupil or staff member is contacted by Test and Protect to self-isolate as a contact

Anyone who is contacted by the Test and Protect team to self-isolate as a contact of a case within or out with the school, should follow their advice and self-isolate for 14 days as advised. The individual should advise the head teacher at the school of the situation so that they are aware of their absence. It is important for the individual to follow the advice of the Test and Protect team to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

A pupil/staff member tests positive for COVID-19 or is advised to self-isolate but still comes to school

Further discussions initially should be held with the individual or the parent/carer to explain the benefit of self-isolation in helping to stop COVID-19. If they still refuse to adhere to the advice the school should get in touch with the Health Protection Team.

A positive case for COVID-19 has a sibling in another school

The pupil who tested positive will be contacted by Test and Protect and advised to self-isolate for at least 10 days. The household members of this individual (including siblings) will also be advised to self-isolate for 14 days, and to get tested if they develop symptoms. The Health Protection Team will also be alerted and a risk assessment undertaken to determine the possible risk of spread of infection. Based on this risk assessment, the appropriate actions will be identified to manage the situation in the school with the positive case and in the school with the sibling. This may include introducing further infection control measures (such as environmental cleaning) and or tightening of COVID secure processes.

Annex B - Checklist: Staff member feels unwell with symptoms of COVID-19

Actions to be taken	Complete Y/N
<p>Staff member should go home as soon as possible.</p> <p>Try to avoid using public transport, but if necessary, a face covering must be worn in line with Scottish Government guidance.</p>	
<p>Staff members arranges a test through their Local Authority/School employer portal or via NHS Inform (online at www.nhsinform.scot or call 0800 028 2816.)</p> <p>Staff member will inform their manager of the result once they have received it.</p>	
<p>The immediate area occupied by the staff member should be cleaned</p> <p>Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.</p> <p>All waste items (e.g. PPE, cloths) should be double bagged and stored securely for 72 hours before disposal.</p>	
<p>Individuals who have had any contact with the staff member should wash their hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds and remain vigilant regarding developing symptoms of COVID-19. They may be identified as a close contact by the Health Protection team or Test and Protect following contact tracing investigations.</p>	

Annex C - Checklist: Child feels unwell with symptoms of COVID-19

Actions to be taken	Complete Y/N
<p>The affected child should be isolated somewhere safe and at least 2 metres away from other people.</p> <p>If possible, the door should be closed with supervision, ventilation and use of a separate bathroom.</p> <p>Any adult looking after the child should maintain 2m distancing. If this is not possible, they should wear gloves, apron and a fluid resistant surgical mask.</p>	
<p>The child should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze, and then put the tissue in the bin. If the child can tolerate a mask or face covering then this should be worn.</p>	
<p>Contact the Parents/carers of the child and request that they come to collect their child as soon as possible. Try to avoid public transport if possible.</p> <p>Siblings/other members of the household should also be collected and taken home, as all members of the household should now stay at home and isolate.</p> <p>The parent/carer should book an online test via NHS Inform immediately for the symptomatic child. Results are usually sent by text within 48 hours.</p> <p>The parent/carer of the child should notify the school of the result as soon as possible.</p>	
<p>If the affected person has mild symptoms and is over the age of 16 they should go home as soon as possible minimising contact with others where possible. Their responsible adult should be informed they are being sent home.</p> <p>If having to use public transport a face covering must be worn in line with Scottish Government advice.</p> <p>They should book a test online via NHS Inform immediately.</p>	
<p>The isolation room and immediate area (e.g. desk) occupied by the child should be cleaned.</p> <p>Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.</p> <p>All waste items (e.g. PPE, cloths) should be double bagged and stored securely for 72 hours before disposal.</p>	

Individuals who have had any contact with the child should wash their hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds and remain vigilant regarding developing symptoms of COVID-19.	
They may be identified as a close contact by the Health Protection team or Test and Protect following contact tracing investigations.	

Annex D - Checklist: Child who does not attend school/reports an absence

Actions to be taken	Complete Y/N
Call parent/carer to enquire about reason for absence	
<p>If absent due to household member having symptoms of COVID-19, check pupil aware of self-isolation advice as per NHS inform and should not return to school until the test result of the symptomatic household member is returned.</p> <p>If the test is positive, the pupil should isolate for at least 14 days as advised by the Test and Protect team and NHS inform. Even if the child is tested and is negative they must remain at home.</p> <p>The pupil can return to school after the 14 days as long as they remain without symptoms. If they develop symptoms, follow actions in the next box. No testing of the pupil is required unless they themselves develop symptoms.</p>	
<p>If absence due to COVID-19 symptoms, advise parent/carer to book an online test via NHS Inform immediately for the child (if not already done so). Results are usually sent by text within 48 hours.</p> <p>The parent/carer of the child should notify the school of the result as soon as possible.</p>	
<p>If the pupil tests positive, the pupil should isolate for at least 10 days as advised by the Test and Protect team.</p> <p>School should inform the HPT and local authority as soon as possible.</p> <p>School arranges environmental cleaning of affected areas on the day the pupil leaves school (don't wait for the test result).</p>	
If the pupil tests negative, having had or still having symptoms, they can return to school once well and after they have been fever-free for 48 hours (without the use of antipyrexials, e.g. paracetamol)	

If symptoms have been diarrhoea or vomiting they can return once well and 48 hours after symptoms have resolved.	
If an increase in the background rate of absence due to suspected cases of COVID-19 (or anything else, e.g. norovirus) is noted, HPT should also be informed. If you are worried then get in touch with the HPT.	

Annex E: Key contacts for local HPTs

Health Board	Telephone Number (Out of Hours Number)	Team Email
Ayrshire & Arran	01292 885858 (01563 521 133 – Crosshouse Hosp Switchboard)	hpteam@aapct.scot.nhs.uk
Borders	01896 825560 (01896 826 000 – Borders General Switchboard)	healthprotection@borders.scot.nhs.uk
Dumfries & Galloway	01387 272 724 (01837 246 246)	dumf-uhb.hpt@nhs.net
Fife	01592 226435 (01592 643 355 – Victoria Hospital Switchboard)	hpt.fife@nhs.net
Forth Valley	01786 457283 (ask for CPHM) (01324 566 000 – Ask for CPHM on call)	FV-UHB.healthprotectionteamnhs.net
Grampian	01224 558520 (0345 456 6000)	grampian.healthprotection@nhs.net
Greater Glasgow & Clyde	0141 201 4917 (0141 211 3600 – Gartnavel Switchboard)	phpu@ggc.scot.nhs.uk
Highland	01463 704886 (01463 704 000 – Raigmore Switchboard)	hpt.highland@nhs.net
Lanarkshire	01698 858232 / 858228 (01236 748 748 – Monklands Switchboard)	healthprotection@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk
Lothian	0131 4655420/ 5422 (0131 242 1000 – Edinburgh Royal Switchboard)	health.protection@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk
Orkney	01856 888034	ork-HB.publicHealth@nhs.net

	(01856 888 000 – Balfour Hospital Switchboard)	
Shetland	01595 743340 (01595 743 000 – Gilbert Bain Switchboard)	shet- hb.PublicHealthShetland@nhs.net
Tayside	01382 596976/987 (01382 660 111 – Ninewells Switchboard)	healthprotectionteam.tayside@nhs. net
Western Isles	01851 708033 (01851 704 704)	wihealthprotection@nhs.net