

7 September 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

As previously outlined I will regularly provide updates when new information is communicated to the school – please see below DE guidance re Symptoms and Testing. I also encourage all parents/guardians to read the correspondence which has already been sent and is available on the school website – Parental information – Letters Home. In addition, there are valuable materials regarding online access and learning on the school website – Staff/Pupil Area – Documents & Links AND Survival Guide for Pupils.

<http://www.banbridgeacademy.org.uk/staff-pupil-area/>

<http://www.banbridgeacademy.org.uk/survival-guide/>

The Minister of Education issued guidance strongly recommending the use of face coverings in corridors and in other communal areas e.g. school transport, including buses and taxis. Therefore, **as a school we are stating that pupils should wear a face covering in corridors and other communal areas, including school transport.**

Symptoms and Testing

In recent days the Public Health Agency has seen a significant increase in individuals requesting a COVID-19 test where they do not have COVID-19 symptoms.

Testing is only available for individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been advised by the Public Health Agency Contact Tracing Service to have a test.

The symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- A new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual); or
- A high temperature/fever – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature); or
- A loss of or change in sense of smell or taste.

If an individual does not have these specific symptoms, they do not require a test. Schools **should not** ask pupils or staff to book a COVID-19 test unless **they have one or more of the symptoms above.**

At this time of year, it is common for colds and similar viral infections to circulate. In many cases, children will be well enough to attend school and continue their learning with little or no interruption to their education. In other cases, for instance where they have quite a heavy cold, they may need to take a day or two off to recover.

If a pupil or staff member **does not have symptoms of COVID-19** but has other cold-like symptoms, they do not need to be tested and do not need to self-isolate. The individual can attend school if fit to do so.

Additionally, where a pupil displays gastrointestinal symptoms, such as vomiting or diarrhoea, they should not attend school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days. In these instances they should follow the school's usual attendance policy in respect of these symptoms.

I will endeavour to keep you informed on a regular basis and please read all of the information available on the school website.

Kind regards

R S McLoughlin
Principal