**Template Letter for ‘Close Contacts’ of Someone with COVID-19 Symptoms**

Schools should follow the process below before considering writing to ‘close contacts’ of a ‘possible’ case of COVID-19.

Also refer to [flowchart](https://www.egfl.org.uk/coronavirus#testing) on EGFL for other actions.

**Suggested text for letter to parents**

Dear Parent,

We are writing to you as a precautionary measure as your child has been in close contact of someone with COVID-19 symptoms. This person is now isolating at home and we have encouraged them to get tested as soon as possible.

There are many possible causes of fever or cough in children, other than coronavirus. Currently only a minority of COVID-19 tests conducted in children test positive. As such, the government does not currently advise that close contacts of people with coronavirus symptoms should isolate unless there is a positive test result.

However, we want to be transparent to inform parents during this time. We are doing this because, firstly, we know that the testing system is currently not as fast as we would like; and secondly, we know that many families have household members who may be at higher risk of COVID-19 (e.g. elderly relatives or people with health conditions such as diabetes). We want to inform you in case of the chance that there has been exposure to COVID-19.

This is in line with the government’s [**Stay at Home**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection) guidance which states that:

*“If you develop symptoms you may wish to alert the people that you have had close contact with over the last 48 hours to let them know that you might have coronavirus (COVID-19) but are waiting for a test result. At this stage, those people should not self-isolate. Alerting those that you have been in contact with means they can take extra care in practising social distancing and good hand and respiratory hygiene. They can also be more alert to any symptoms they might develop.”*

Please refer to ‘**Appendix 1: How to stop COVID-19 spreading’** which refers to measures you should take to reduce the spread of COVID-19, especially if you have a household member who is at greater risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19.

You should also be aware of symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, new persistent cough, lack or change of taste/smell), and make sure that if anyone in your household develops these symptoms they should [stay at home](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cdpollard%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CT6HDTH89%5C-home-guidance%5Cstay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection) and [ask for a coronavirus test](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/) as soon as possible. You should also promptly inform the school. This is summarised in **‘Appendix 2: What to do if your child develops symptoms’.**

We will off course inform you of any confirmed case of COVID-19 at school as this will require isolation for close contacts for 14 days.

Please see [NHS website](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/) for further information on coronavirus.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

**Appendix 1: How to stop COVID-19 spreading**

If someone you live with is at high risk of severe illness from coronavirus, you should be particularly careful in implementing public health measures:

* Ensuring every member of your household [washes their hands](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/) with soap and water regularly for 20 seconds (or use hand gel sanitiser) and has good [respiratory hygiene](https://www.england.nhs.uk/south/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/09/catch-bin-kill.pdf).
* Aim to keep 2 metres away from vulnerable people you live with and encourage them to sleep in another bed
* Minimise as much as possible the time any vulnerable family members spend in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas, and keep shared spaces well ventilated.
* If you do share a toilet or bathroom with a vulnerable person, it is important that you clean them every time you use them, wiping surfaces you have come into contact with
* Clean and disinfect household surfaces regularly, especially ‘high touch’ surfaces
* Avoid sharing towels with the vulnerable household member

Please note that the current [national guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings) states that children who live with someone who is shielding due to being ‘extremely clinically vulnerable’ should only be at school if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and if children are able to understand and follow those instructions.

Please also remember general public health measures to reduce the risk of infection in our community by:

* Staying at home as much as possible
* [Staying safe outside your home](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-safe-outside-your-home/staying-safe-outside-your-home), including by maintaining social distancing (at least 2 metres) when near people who are not your household members
* Wearing [cloth face coverings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering) when in crowded public spaces (e.g. public transport and shops) to protect others
* Regular [hand washing](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/) with soap and water regularly for 20s (or use hand gel sanitiser) and good [respiratory hygiene](https://www.england.nhs.uk/south/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/09/catch-bin-kill.pdf).

**Appendix 2: What to do if your child develops symptoms**

 Please be aware of the symptoms of COVID-19. The most common symptoms are recent onset of:

* fever (greater than 37.8°C)
* new persistent/continuous cough; and/or
* loss or change in sense of taste or smell.

If anyone in your household develops any of these symptoms, however mild, they need to [stay at home](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection) (7 days for the person with symptoms and 14 days for the rest of the household).

You can [seek advice](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/) from NHS or by calling 111. The person with symptoms should access testing via the [NHS testing website](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/) or by phoning 119. Do not wait; ask for a test as soon as possible after symptoms start. If it is your child who is displaying symptoms you can request a test on their behalf.

If anyone in your household develops symptoms, if you can, consider moving any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period.

If your child develops coronavirus symptoms, promptly inform the school. If your child tests positive for coronavirus, promptly inform the school.