

4th January 2022

Dear Parents, Carers and Colleagues

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all staff and children back to our schools for the Spring term. We hope that you have had a restful, enjoyable and healthy festive season and have been able to spend some time with your families. Over the holiday period, there has been a local increase in the number of reported cases of the Omicron variant of COVID and some new rules regarding testing and isolation. This letter is intended to share the advice around the changes. Waterton Academy Trust schools will send out a further letter detailing their contingency plan for education in the event that staffing in individual schools is heavily affected by this outbreak.

As per the latest Government announcements, it is now possible to end self-isolation **early** after 7 days, **following 2 negative LFD tests taken 24 hours apart. The first LFD test should not be taken before Day 6.** This guidance applies to all who have tested positive, vaccinated and unvaccinated adults and children.

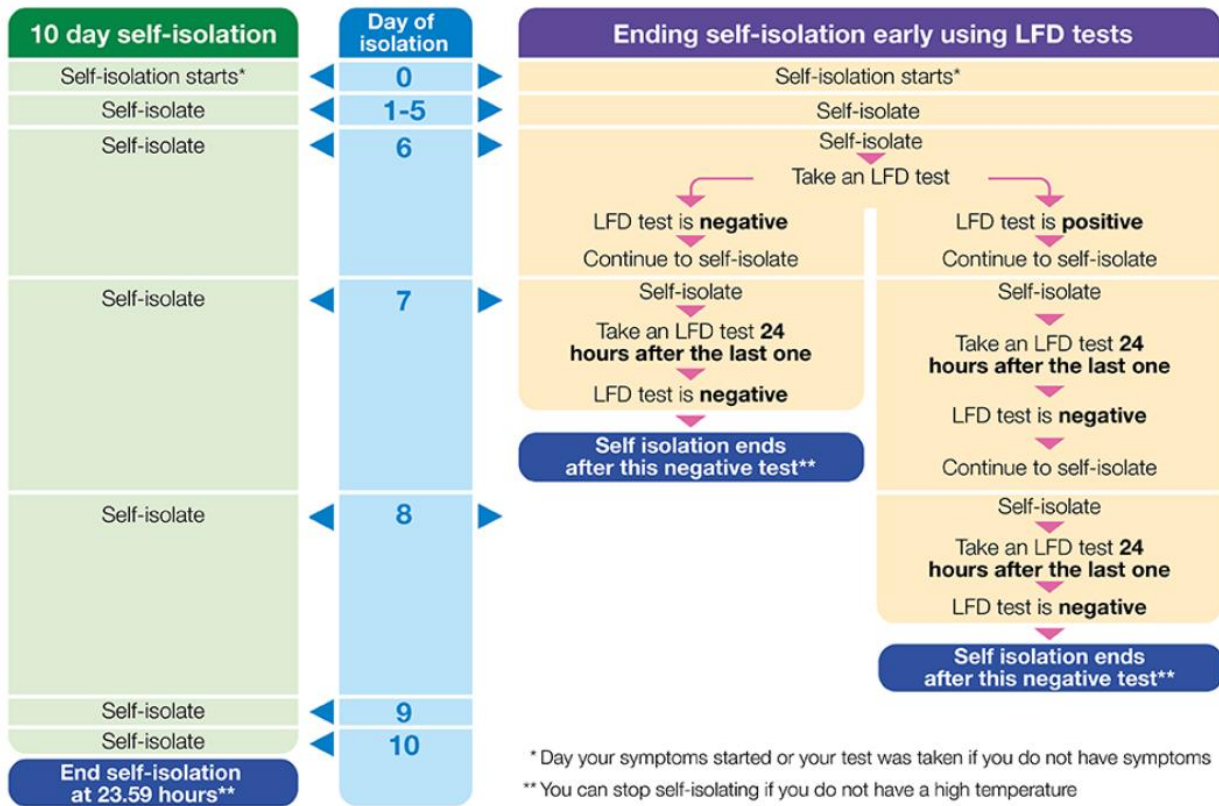
For example: If you test positive on a Saturday, you can take an LFD the following Friday (Day 6). If you take this test at 8am, then you must leave 24 hours before taking a second test, so 8am on Saturday morning (Day 7).

One of the most common misunderstandings is around counting days of isolation. The day that you test positive or first have symptoms is classed as Day 0 (see the chart below). Day 1 of counted isolation begins the following day. On Day 10, isolation finishes at 11.59pm on that day, regardless of the time of day you tested positive.

Day positive LFD/PCR test taken / symptoms began = Day 0	Day 6		Day 7
Saturday	Friday	You must leave 24 hours between each test	Saturday
Sunday	Saturday		Sunday
Monday	Sunday		Monday
Tuesday	Monday		Tuesday
Wednesday	Tuesday		Wednesday
Thursday	Wednesday		Thursday
Friday	Thursday		Friday

If you have 2 negative LFD tests, one on Day 6 and one on Day 7, and **no longer have a high temperature**, you can come out of isolation straight after the second test on Day 7. If not, then you must continue to isolate as you are still shedding the virus.

Ending self-isolation if you have had COVID-19 symptoms or have received a positive COVID-19 test result



It is still the case that children should not attend school if they have:

- a new, continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

Where children have any of these symptoms, parents should not rely on an LFD (lateral flow test), but go to a testing centre for a PCR.

Isolating as a Contact

If you are **fully vaccinated*** or aged under 18 years and 6 months, and you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, you are not legally required to self-isolate. However, everyone in this situation, including children, should take an LFD test every day for 7 days and self-isolate if any of these test results are positive. During this period of daily testing close contacts can continue to attend work/school except in the event of a positive test.

If you are aged 18 years 6 months or over and you are **not fully vaccinated*** and you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, you are legally required to stay at home and self-isolate

****You are fully vaccinated 14 days after having received 2 doses of an approved vaccine (such as Pfizer/BioNTech, AstraZeneca or Moderna/Spikevax) or one dose of the single-dose Janssen vaccine.***

Children under the age of 5

Regular LFD tests are not recommended for children aged under 5. If they live with someone who has COVID-19 they are not legally required to self-isolate but you should limit their contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19 and arrange for them to take a PCR test as soon as possible.

As always, Waterton Academy Trust continues to follow Government guidance around control measures, testing and isolation. We will seek to keep all members of our school communities informed of any changes to this guidance.

With high infection rates nationally, we are once again facing challenging times for all. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of our school communities for their continued support.

Stay safe and well.



Mr. D Dickinson OBE
CEO
Waterton Academy Trust