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Dear Parent/Guardian,

Now our schools have restarted after the summer break and our children have enjoyed their first three weeks of teaching, I felt it important to write and reassure you how well things are going. The measures in place throughout the schools, to prevent cases of COVID-19, are based on the best scientific understanding of how the virus spreads and follow the UK Government's strict educational guidelines. I am impressed with how willingly students and staff continue to follow the regimes of cleaning, handwashing, social distancing and movement. In particular, the students' calm acceptance of these changes is an inspiration to us all. To ensure you and your families remain safe, it is vital we continue to look after each other. The following information will help you give that support.

What do I do if my child is unwell?

Part of that support is knowing what to do if your child is unwell. In Cyprus we are fortunate to not have to face the severity of winter illnesses we see in the UK. However, we will experience some seasonal illness and it is also normal for children to have colds, sore throats, coughs and runny noses all year round as their immune system develops.

I have included a flow chart to help you decide what to do if your child is unwell.

If you are unsure what to do, contact your medical centre and a healthcare worker will help.

What are COVID-19 symptoms?

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back. You do not need to measure your temperature.
- **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.
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

If your child is at school and presents with any of these symptoms they will be isolated from others and the school will call you to collect your child. You must contact the medical centre.

What happens if there is a positive test in the school?

If a child or member of staff within the school tests positive for COVID-19, the Joint Services Health Unit and medical team will provide advice and support to the school and the families

- Only people who are assessed as being a close contact to the positive case will need to isolate.
- The school will advise you if your child needs to isolate at home.
- Close contacts must isolate for 14 days, as symptoms can take up to 14 days to appear from your last contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19.
- Children who are isolating will be supported with remote-learning.

What happens if my child may have COVID-19?

We are fortunate here that we have a skilled healthcare team and the resources to give a higher standard service than the UK to anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms. Our care pathway is based on clinical research and has been approved by the Defence Public Health Unit. I have included a flowchart to help you understand how we manage a suspected case of COVID-19.

Medical Centre actions:

- You and your family will isolate at home and your child will be swab tested.
- Your GP will assess whether the symptoms are more likely to be caused by another illness.
- If the swab test is negative, but we do not have another diagnosis, we may decide to take another swab test. You and your family must remain isolated.
- Following a second negative swab test, and if your household does not have any symptoms, your GP may decide the risk of their being COVID-19 in the family is low enough to release you from isolation.
- It is therefore possible that your family will be in isolation for <7 days, whilst we determine a diagnosis. [This is a change to the previous protocol which required a minimum of 14-days isolation, regardless of swab tests results]

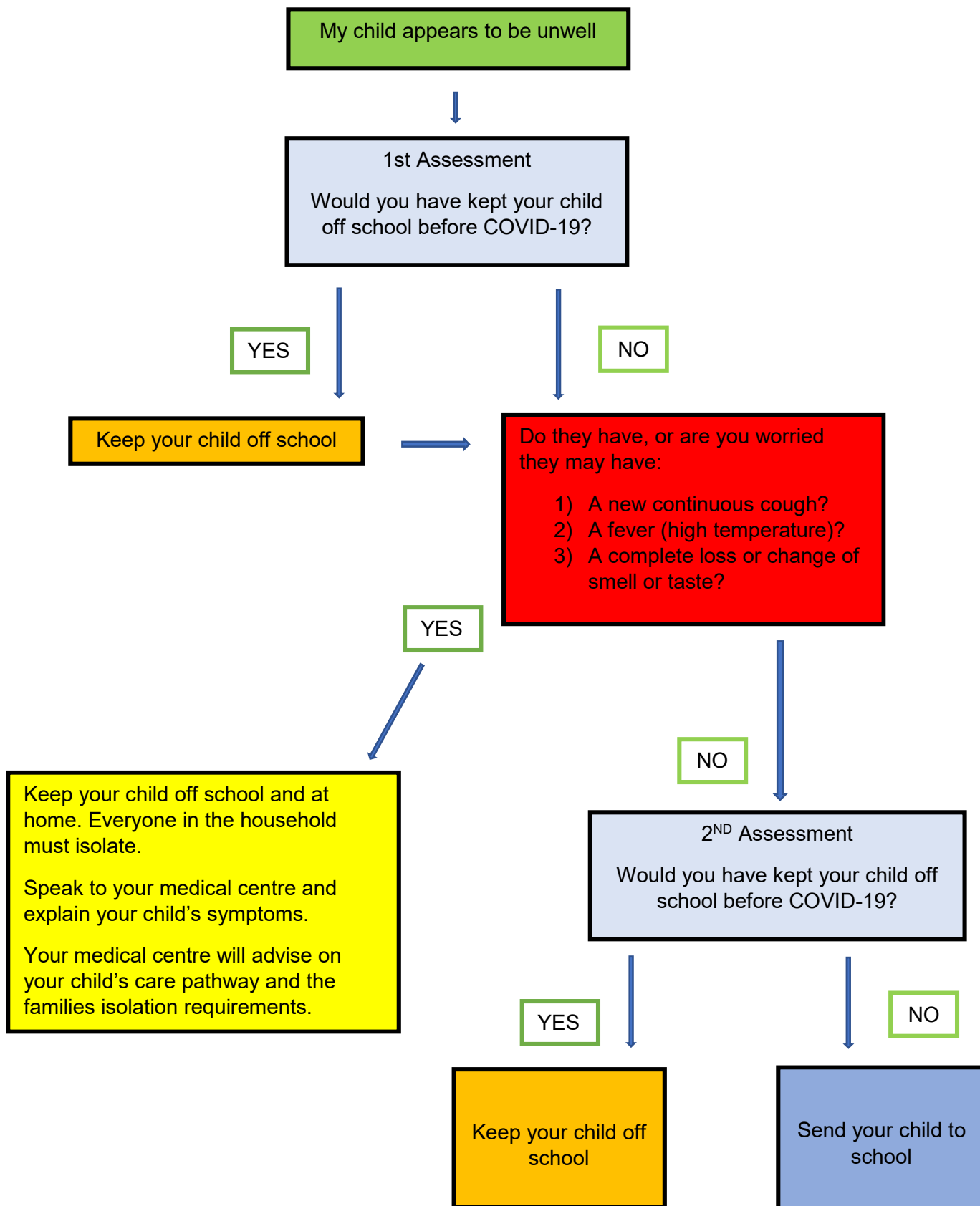
It is important to understand:

- A negative test result is just one factor when assessing if someone is required to isolate when they have COVID-19 symptoms, as a false negative result can occur in 30% of COVID-19 swab tests.
- Everyone is different, and every suspected case is different, even if they appear the same.
- We will manage all suspected cases in a clinically safe way specific to the needs of your family.
- We have only known COVID-19 for 9 months and we do not yet know the full impact of the virus on the future health of a positive case, therefore it is important you do report to your medical centre any symptoms you think may be COVID-19.

It only remains for me to thank you for your loyalty and support of the schools and medical centres. I hope you feel encouraged that we are taking every appropriate precaution to look after your children and ensure they are safe to thrive in their education. You will know now how quickly things can change, but I am confident that together we will be able to respond swiftly. After such an excellent start, we now collectively face the remainder of the Term with confidence and tolerance.

Sonia M Phythian

Should I keep my child off school?



Suspected COVID-19 Case Management

