

22/11/2021

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Dear Parents/ Carers,

Additional coronavirus (COVID-19) measures for schools and educational settings

You will be aware that nationally, cases of COVID-19 amongst school aged children are currently high, and Leicestershire is no exception. As a result, we are asking all schools and early-years settings to implement some additional public health measures. By acting quickly ahead of winter we can all help reduce the spread of the virus, protect each other and the most vulnerable members of our communities

In response to the recent increase in COVID-19 cases across the county and in accordance with Government guidelines, we are writing to request all secondary school aged children be encouraged to wear a face covering in communal areas. This is in addition to measures that may already be place in response to local outbreaks. The current epidemiological picture is affecting attendance, causing educational disruption and affecting the roll out of the vaccination programme. We must take action to ensure attendance is not further reduced.

Case rates in the 11-16-year-old population have been consistently high throughout the Autumn term. Although there are promising signs of a reduction in these age groups, rates remain high, and local and regional teams continue to deal with many school outbreaks affecting both staff and students.

Transmission of COVID is impacted by ventilation, length of exposure and activities that generate more aerosols such as shouting. Face coverings worn in communal spaces (such as hallways, stairwells and lunch queues) in areas of high prevalence may be beneficial to reduce transmission and should have limited impact on education delivery. Additionally, face coverings must continue to be worn on school transport.

It is envisaged these measures will be required for the remainder of the term, however they will be regularly reviewed.

Testing

In addition, we also ask:

- All secondary aged children continue to perform a rapid lateral flow test (LFT) test twice weekly
- Identified (non-household) contacts seek a PCR test as soon as possible, and a further LFT 5 days later
- Household contacts arrange a PCR test as soon as possible, but also perform a daily LFTs for 10 days.
- If a child tests positive on either LFT or PCR, isolate immediately. A positive LFT will require a confirmatory PCR test within 2 days.

Vaccinations

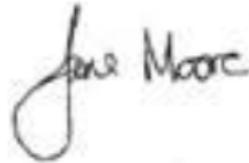
Vaccination is one of the best ways to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 is to get vaccinated. Everyone aged over 12 who is eligible has now been invited to receive their COVID-19 vaccine. The COVID-19 vaccination programme in secondary schools will provide protection to children who are vaccinated and help to reduce disruption to face to face education this winter. Very few healthy children and young people with COVID-19 infection go on to have severe disease but vaccinating them should help to reduce the need for them to have time off school and to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 within schools. Find out how to get yours locally at <https://www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk/my-health/coronavirus-advice/coronavirus-vaccine/>

By implementing some precautionary measures, we hope to protect our community so that the festive period can be enjoyed safely by all. We would like to thank you for your continuing support, and know that school leaders and staff are doing everything they can to keep children safe and in education.

Yours faithfully,



Mike Sandys
Director of Public Health
Leicestershire County Council



Jane Moore
Director of Children and Family Services
Leicestershire County Council