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Public Health Advice to parents and carers of children at Rochdale schools

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are writing to update you on the latest position in relation to COVID-19 cases and transmission in our schools and colleges. The number of positive cases in school aged children are still quite high and risk of further transmission remains a concern.

COVID-19 cases in Rochdale have slightly reduced but cases in school aged children are still high. Recently, we are also starting to see rates increase in parents and grandparents with increased hospitalisations.

The council's education team, public health and schools have worked closely to keep children safe and avoid need to send full classes or year groups home to minimise the continued disruption to children's education.

Therefore, our Public health team has advised to introduce some additional measures in schools that have minimal impact on education and will help ensure we are reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission within schools. These include where possible not organising large gatherings, events and activities.

Head teachers are asked to consider the potential COVID-19 related risk increase that an event or an activity might represent, and the measures that can reasonably be introduced that could reduce that risk. For each event/activity, a risk assessment will be completed that details the safety measures to be implemented.

With sufficient mitigation, where we agree for events to go ahead, a combination of measures or all measures will be implemented from the list below:

- Organising events in large, well-ventilated spaces
- Using ticketing or a booking system to manage numbers
- Repeated sittings or performances to reduce the numbers present at any one time
- Asking attendees to take an LFD test before they attend. This is strongly encouraged for attendees who are household contact of a positive case, including children in

KS2.

- Asking attendees to not attend if they have any COVID-19 symptoms or feel generally unwell.
- Encouraging wearing of face coverings when not seated/eating/drinking
- Encouraging social distancing and wearing face covering where this is not possible.
- Encouraging frequent handwashing or use alcohol gel
- Reducing areas where crowding may occur. E.g. Before and after event, lunch breaks
- Use of one way systems where possible.
- Ensuring adequate cleaning before and after the event, particularly in frequently used areas such as toilets.
- Ensuring external vendors and/or stall holders comply with school safety measures

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things we can do to help reduce the risk of catching the virus:

- Wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- Use hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- Participate in twice weekly LFD testing, following national guidelines (recommended for 11 years and over). Order LFD tests for your household here: www.nhs.uk/get-tested
- Have the COVID-19 vaccination if eligible, ensuring that you have both doses if you are over 16

For more information:

Please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-COVID-19/>

For information on local services and support, visit

<http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/coronavirus>

If you have anyone on your family eligible for booster vaccine please visit,

[COVID-19 vaccination programme \(rochdale.gov.uk\)](https://www.rochdale.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccination-programme)

The above measures will help us to reduce transmission in our school, without having to introduce additional measures that can have a negative impact on the education and wellbeing of children and young people.

Your support with this will help us to keep people safe over winter and reduce the number of COVID-19 infections in the borough.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Covid19 Infection Control Duty Desk