



North Tyneside Council

North Tyneside Council
Quadrant
The Silverlink North
Cobalt Business Park
North Tyneside
NE27 0BY

21 October 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: COVID-19 measures in schools

In the last few weeks, we have seen a large increase in the number of children and young people testing positive for COVID-19. Around 1400 people in the borough tested positive in the last seven days and around 50% of them were young people under the age of 19 with a further 30% of people aged 20-49.

While it is clear that the vaccination programme is effective in preventing serious disease and deaths, the vaccine does not prevent people from being infected or transmitting the virus and we know that older people and those with underlying medical conditions are more vulnerable to becoming ill. Indeed our hospitals are beginning to see a rise in the number of COVID-19 cases being admitted.

Even though adults who test positive may not become ill, many are absent from work because of household transmission from their children, or because they need to care for children who have tested positive. This is impacting on children's education and critical services such as the NHS and social care.

This means we now need to consider what we can do to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 in our schools and in the community.

On that basis from 1st November 2021 on return from half term holidays we are now recommending:

1. **The use of face coverings** in classrooms and communal areas for secondary age pupils and in communal areas for all adults.
2. **PCR testing** for all adults and pupils if they are a close contact of a positive case*.
3. **Daily LFT testing for 10 days** for any adult or secondary age pupil who is a household contact of a positive case and is exempt from isolation and continues to attend school. Testing should start from the day the household member has symptoms or if they don't have symptoms from when they tested positive*.
4. Schools carefully consider whether **educational visits and residential trips should go ahead**
5. Schools carefully consider whether **open days or events** could move to a virtual format

6. Additional attention be given to **ventilation, cleaning and respiratory and hand hygiene**

**Note: People who have tested positive with a PCR test within the last 90 should not be encouraged to test unless they develop new symptoms*

These recommendations will of course be reviewed at regular intervals and as infections levels change. The number one priority remains, to maximise the number of children and young people in face-to-face education.

The vaccination offer for 12-15 year olds is also an important measure and following the Health Secretary's announcement yesterday there will be increased access for young people, including a change to the National Booking Service so that vaccinations for 12-15-year olds can be booked online or via 119. This will complement the offer in schools .

On top of the measures that schools are taking, there are some measures you can continue to support your school with:

1. Continue to support your child to undertake lateral flow testing twice a week if they are of secondary school age
2. On return to school after half term support your child to wear a face covering if they are of secondary school age, both in school and in enclosed indoor spaces in public.
3. Carefully consider the benefits of the vaccination programme for children between the age of 12-15.
4. If you or your child develop symptoms of COVID-19 book a free NHS test as soon as possible (www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test). You can also phone 119. Most importantly stay at home until it is time to take your test.

Finally, we would like to thank you for everything you've done to keep your family and community safe, and for your patience in continuing to support schools during this challenging time.



Wendy Burke
Director of Public Health



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Assistant Director of Education