

Covid-19 update from the Education and Skills Team

Professional Advocates for Children in Education, Governor Support, NQTs, Early Years, the Virtual School for Looked after Children and In Year Fair Access

A final bulletin for the year

Although there has been a small amount of new information since Tuesday – surveys about test supplies for example, we have decided that Derby leaders have had enough to think about for now. You need a rest – as complete a rest as is possible. The last few days of sweltering heat have added yet another layer to the worst year in education that we can remember (and some of us have decades of memories to draw on). Some schools have had particular struggles, so have struggles ongoing and all schools have had to face demons over the last 12 months.

However – in any crisis, we find heroines and heroes. There are thousands of you so impossible to name in most instances. We haven't had a round of applause for some time but maybe we should today:

- For headteachers, senior leaders, teachers and teaching assistants for the emotional and practical support you have provided to others such as the children in your schools and academies, their families and to each other.
- For support staff who have answered the telephone to worried or angry parents, who have ensured surfaces are clean, rooms well-ventilated, hand sanitisers full and signage in place
- For business managers who have calculated and paid the bills, engaged with local test and trace and organised testing sites
- For governors who have stood firmly behind their school leaders, checking that nothing has been forgotten and reminding leaders that they too need rest.
- For our children and their families who have faced enormous disruption and have made a point of showing their appreciation for what you have all done

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- For our new friends in other teams – colleagues in Social Care and SEND with whom we have addressed barriers to attendance and specific needs, colleagues in Health and Safety who have provided help and advice on risk assessments and safety and colleagues in local health teams who have always been there at the end of a phone for school and academy leaders and for us.
- Our governor tea-time topics have been well attended. We want to thank Robyn (Dr Robyn Dewis), Siobhan and Marie who have given their time to talk to governors about Covid data and trends.
- For our finance team, the DfE (yes, really), Paul and Bernard (we know them, you might not) for working swiftly to make sure that our hungry children are fed through school holidays.

Thank you everyone. We have done this together.

Finally, there is no better place than here to also thank my (Jo talking here) colleagues in Education and Skills. Jayne has been an excellent partner in crime, assembling the information for these bulletins and finding the odd light-hearted word or image to try to cheer you up. Other members of the team have done their best to support you, each other and me.

You are all heroes and heroines. Whatever happens next year, we will be alright. Tears? Nah – hay fever!

OK, one more get up and then stop.

Stay safe

Pauline, Jo, Jayne

