

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

Taking care of ourselves and others

Leaders, teachers and support staff will be only too aware that cases in Derby children have been rising now schools are back. Some schools and academies have quite large numbers of cases and have been advised by CCT and discussed in our local health meetings. At the time of the last meeting, there were 29 Derby schools with 5 or more cases. Some secondary colleagues are experiencing particular difficulties. So, our advice to you all is to continue to be very careful. Please remind students and staff about wearing masks on the bus, please try to avoid indoor PE if there are cases in your school (or in a sibling's school) and consider remote meetings such as parents' evenings. Regular testing remains important – we have reproduced the national guidance again later in this bulletin – and we do have enough PCR tests in Derby (though they are released in batches so if a parent tells you there aren't any, advise them to try again in an hour).

As you know, we are continuing to facilitate network meetings for mental health leaders in schools. The next one (remote) will be from 10.30-12.00 on October 15th. Please email Jayne Hadfield for a Teams invitation. Our agenda will be:

- Welcome
- How schools can support staff and pupil well-being
- Breakout time – discussion of some scenarios as well as time to talk to fellow MH Leads about what is going well and not so well
- What help is out there? (input from Michelle Robinson and from Ellen Wilkinson)
- National updates

For the second item, two schools have already volunteered to share examples of their approach to mental health and well-being in their schools. One is a secondary colleague and the other is from an infant school. If anyone else would be willing to share for 5 minutes then please let Jo Ward know to inform timings. An offer from a special school colleague, a primary/junior school colleague and/or someone from early years would be particularly welcome. It would be great if Derby leaders can continue to help and support each other as you did last year – we know it made a difference.

Pauline, Jo and the E&S team

5 Oct 2021

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Money for testing (and the swabs are free) *with apologies to Dire Straits*

Guidance

Coronavirus (COVID-19) National Testing Programme: conditions of grant from August 2021

Published 28 September 2021

This document provides guidance on the way forthcoming funding will be calculated and when you can expect to receive it. We will cover this in a little more detail at our forthcoming Business Managers network meeting for those of you who are joining us.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-national-testing-programme-conditions-of-grant-from-august-2021>

Partner update for mainstream schools

Guidance

Schools COVID-19 operational guidance

Updated 27 September 2021

Most of the changes are as in the guidance for specialist settings, explained on the next page. An extra item for mainstream concerns accountability. The DfE will not publish data based on exam and assessment results from summer 2021 in performance tables and schools will not be held to account for this data. However, they will publish Key Stage 4 and 16 to 18 subject entries and destinations data at school and college level in performance tables in autumn 2021. For the academic year 2021 to 2022, results from qualifications achieved at Key Stage 4 and post 16 will be published at school and college level on performance tables.

They will not publish the results of Key Stage 2 primary assessments. They will still produce the normal suite of Key Stage 2 accountability measures and share these securely with schools, academy trusts, local authorities and Ofsted.

For further information, see [COVID-19: school and college accountability](#).

Vaccinations

Secondary colleagues will be only too aware of the heat this topic is generating in some quarters – harassment and attempts to deceive with fake communications have been added to the list of things that headteachers should not be having to deal with. We are here to help if you need us – if a message from the ‘NHS’ doesn’t look right, or even if it does, we can check with our health teams.

For your older students, 16 and 17 year olds can now use the online booking service for their C-19 vaccine. They can:

- [book their COVID-19 vaccination appointments online](#) for an appointment at a vaccination centre or pharmacy
- [find a walk-in COVID-19 vaccination site](#) to get vaccinated without needing an appointment

If students cannot book appointments online, they can call 119 free of charge. They can speak to a translator if they need to.

Extended flexibility- admissions

Statutory guidance

Changes to the admission appeals regulations during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

Updated 30 September 2021

The temporary regulations have been extended until 30 September 2022. The appeals code has not been amended.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code

Message from local health team re: PCR testing sites

There is plenty of appointment capacity for PCR testing in the City, but the national portal releases these in blocks during the day to control lab demand. This is very frustrating and we continue to feedback on this.

If a parent/ member of staff logs on the portal and is given a distant site we advise that they wait a couple of hours and try again. Local appointments will become available through the day.

Changes to guidance at the end of September

Guidance

SEND and specialist settings: additional COVID-19 operational guidance

Updated 27 September 2021

www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings

This (and its partner guidance for mainstream settings) have had a few changes including removing out of date content such as that relating to the summer. The main change is in relation to advice for those previously considered to be CEV. Nobody below the age of 18 is now considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) and they have all been removed from the shielding patient list. With regard to adults, as you are aware all social distancing measures in the workplace ended in July including government advice to work from home. The shielding programme has ended so adults previously considered CEV should follow the same guidance as everyone else (although they can take extra personal precautions should they choose to). Some of the people in this situation may have received personal advice from their specialist or clinician.

Employers should be able to explain the measures they have in place to keep staff safe at work. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published [guidance on protecting vulnerable workers](#), including [advice for employers and employees on how to talk about reducing risks in the workplace](#). All employers are required to take steps to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace and should be able to explain what measures they have put in place to keep their employees safe at work. Individual risk assessments are not required. However, employers will continue to discuss any concerns that staff previously considered CEV may have.

Regarding vaccines, all students aged between 12 and 17 are eligible for one dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, whilst those with certain medical conditions that make them more at risk of serious illness are eligible for 2 doses. (The latter will be contacted by a local NHS service such as their GP surgery to arrange their appointments.) All other 12 to 15 year olds will be offered the vaccine via the school-based programme. Older students (16-17) will be invited to a local NHS service or can access the vaccine via some walk-in COVID-19 vaccination sites. You can find out more about the in-school vaccination programme in [COVID-19 vaccination: resources for schools and parents](#). This includes information on parental consent and Gillick competence.

Remote education continues to be expected when children and young people need to self-isolate because they have tested positive but are well enough to continue learning or because they are abroad and had to stay there because of C-19 travel restrictions. Leaders need to maintain school capacity to deliver remote education throughout this academic year 2021/22. Where the SEND need means that access to remote education is not possible without adult support, schools should work with families to agree reasonable adjustments. Schools should continue to check that pupils are engaging and should work rapidly with families to find solutions if there is a concern. Further details on delivering remote education for children and young people with SEND are set out in [remote education good practice](#).

Advice about transport can be found in the [dedicated transport to schools and colleges COVID-19 operational guidance](#). The requirement to wear face coverings has been removed from law but continues to be recommended in enclosed and crowded spaces. Children and young people aged 11 and over should wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated transport to secondary school. Drivers and passenger assistants will not normally require personal protective equipment (PPE) on home to school transport. However, where the care and interventions that a child or young person ordinarily receives on home to school transport required the use of PPE before C-19, that should continue as usual.

Leaders should have contingency plans (sometimes called outbreak management plans) outlining what you would do if pupils or staff test positive for C-19, or how you would operate if you were advised to take extra measures to help break chains of transmission. The government has made it clear to schools and local health teams that any measures in schools should only ever be considered as a last resort, kept to the minimum number of settings or groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible. Central government may offer local areas of particular concern an enhanced response package to help limit increases in transmission. For most settings, it will make sense to think about taking extra action if the number of positive cases substantially increases. Information on what circumstances might lead you to consider taking additional action, and the steps you should work through, can be found in the [contingency framework](#). *Cont'd on page 4*

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Our local health teams continue to provide advice on this as cases develop. For example, quite a few Derby schools have been advised to avoid indoor PE and face to face parents' evenings. Although cases in Derby are not as high as in some other parts of the country (including areas quite close by) they are still too high for us to relax.

This leads us on to the subject of testing:

- Asymptomatic testing – all staff and secondary school students should continue to test twice weekly at home with lateral flow device (LFD) test kits, 3 to 4 days apart. Testing remains voluntary but is strongly encouraged. Settings with secondary aged pupils should retain a small asymptomatic testing site (ATS) so they can offer testing to students who are unable to test themselves at home. There is no need for primary age pupils (those in year 6 and below) to test. Testing is voluntary and no child or young person will be tested unless informed consent has been given by the appropriate person.
- Confirmatory PCR tests - staff and pupils with a positive LFD test result should self-isolate in line with the [stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). They will also need to get a [free PCR test](#) to check if they have COVID-19. Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive LFD, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD and the individual can return to their setting, as long as the individual does not have COVID-19 symptoms. Additional information on [PCR test kits for schools and further education providers](#) is available.

There is additional advice for specialist settings in the updated guidance [Rapid asymptomatic testing in specialist settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

