

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

Epi-curves are changing shape

Although this is a quiet bulletin in terms of new national information, there is some local information to pass on about our school epi-curves. For any school leaders scratching their heads at this point, an epi-curve is one of the graphs that show the number of cases in a school on each day. We looked at one at a recent HSLM when we highlighted the impact of face masks. Our older epi-curves were pleasing to many mathematicians – a nice smooth curve rising and falling gently.

Over the last few days, there have been some outbreaks in secondary and primary schools. Their graphs are different - they start low and then they rise really suddenly and steeply. Cases go from 0 to 60mph in a couple of days. We don't know if this is the new Omicron variant – it takes quite a long time for the analysis to be done on the PCR test information. But we feel nervous – something has changed.

The impact has been significant in some of our schools with some small-scale switching to remote learning because of insufficient staff remaining in school and the health and safety implications of this. So without wishing to cause unnecessary alarm, it might be time for school leaders to think about remote provision so that a switch can be made swiftly and effectively if need be. Many of our schools are continuing until just before Christmas Eve – wondering how bad it would be to move online before that if we need to...

Of course, there may be a change in the national position before then – some clear guidance that keeps us safe and learning would be very welcome.

Finally, a message to those leaders whose schools are having a hard time at the moment – just because you are struggling doesn't mean you aren't doing a great job. We continue to feel very proud of Derby leaders, education and support staff – chin up.

Still here for support and signposting.

Pauline, Jo and the E&S team

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Visitors calling during an outbreak?

Guidance

Deferring Ofsted inspections

Ofsted's policy for determining that an inspection of a provider should not go ahead on the planned dates.

From: Ofsted

Published 13 March 2020

Last updated 2 December 2021 — [See all updates](#)

www.gov.uk/guidance/deferring-ofsted-inspections

This guidance has just been updated – the clue is in the title but having C-19 in your school does not mean deferral is a given. There is a section which provides the circumstances when a deferral is likely to be agreed so worth a look if you are due.

More on face coverings

Guidance

COVID-19 schools operational guidance

Updated 2 December 2021

www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak

“Transparent face coverings can be worn to assist communication with someone who relies on:

- lip reading
- clear sound
- facial expression

Transparent face coverings may be effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19. However, the evidence to support this is currently very limited. The benefits of transparent face coverings should be considered alongside the comfort and breathability of a face covering that contains plastic, which may mean that the face covering is less breathable than layers of cloth. Face coverings (whether transparent or cloth) should fit securely around the face to cover the nose and mouth and be made with a breathable material capable of filtering airborne particles.

Face visors or shields can be worn by those exempt from wearing a face covering but they are not an equivalent alternative in terms of source control of virus transmission. They may protect the wearer against droplet spread in specific circumstances but are unlikely to be effective in preventing the escape of smaller respiratory particles when used without an additional face covering. They should only be used after carrying out a risk assessment for the specific situation and should always be cleaned appropriately.”

