

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

Wishing you a peaceful week

Who knows what the next few days will bring – readers will see from Dr Dewis' letter that there may be some encouraging signs that cases are just starting to fall a little. Next week could be helpful. We have no real idea what 'living with Covid' will actually entail – just know that we continue to keep watch over you and to provide advice and support where we can. We share your concern.

There will be no bulletins next week (obviously), but we will keep an eye out for any guidance that comes out about the new arrangements. We genuinely hope that you are able to switch off and get some rest next week. You certainly deserve it.

In the meantime – chins up. We are in this together and we will continue to be so.

Pauline, Jo and the E&S team

Information for parents of pupils aged 5 to 17 years old on the vaccination programme

The DfE have published some [frequently asked questions](#) (FAQs) on the vaccination programme including information on eligibility, accessibility and advice for parents of children at high risk from COVID-19. The DfE ask that you please share these FAQs with parents, particularly those with children who are clinically vulnerable.

Guidance on how to [book appointments](#) for children aged 12 years and over is available on the NHS website. Further information on the vaccination of high risk children aged 5 to 11 years old is available in the [guide for parents of children aged 5 to 11 years](#) published by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA).

17 Feb 2022

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Attachment:
Letter from Dr Dewis

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Derby City Council

Team Public Health
Contact Robyn Dewis
Our ref RD/NO

Date 17th February 2022

Dear Headteacher,

We are awaiting the formal announcement from Government on 'Living with COVID' on Monday 21st February but would like to share some thoughts with you on what may happen over the next few months.

COVID rates in the city appear to be falling although, as we have noted before, probably not as sharply as our reported data. We anticipate, as we move towards the Spring, that rates will continue to fall, however we believe there may be a change in testing advice from next week and so our understanding of the local picture will be less clear. National modelling indicates we expect to see a decrease in cases through to the summer, with an increase in cases again over next winter; the size of these peaks and troughs is unknown. In addition, we know that there will be a further variant, perhaps several, over the next few years. Variants will appear unpredictably, not necessarily cause less severe disease and may or may not escape existing vaccines.

We are moving to a new phase of the pandemic, where testing and the response to COVID will be focussed on the most vulnerable, where we manage COVID within school settings as we would any other infectious disease. We can also expect a resurgence of our 'usual' infections as we are already seeing an increase in Chicken Pox cases and anticipate the emergence of Scarlet Fever soon.

It is important to remember, whether included in national guidance or not, that there are simple measures that we can continue to use within school settings to reduce the risk of the spread of infectious diseases. As we will no longer understand asymptomatic spread the possibility of undiagnosed cases within settings is significantly increased.

We would advise considering:

- Reminding parents that children should be kept at home if they are unwell
- Maximising ventilation and the use of outdoor space
- Promoting frequent hand washing and respiratory hygiene (catch it, bin it, kill it), including the continued access to hand sanitisers and paper tissues

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- Continuing with enhanced cleaning schedules in the short term
- Reviewing risk assessments and considering where, over the next few weeks or months, you may wish to maintain measures that do not impact on education
- Promoting vaccination to staff and families where appropriate
- Reviewing risk assessments for any staff who are considered vulnerable

We will be in touch again after half term when the national strategy is clearer. As always, the Public Health team are available to offer support. Please continue to contact cct@derby.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Dewis', written in a cursive style.

Dr Robyn Dewis
Director of Public Health