



Derby City Council

Team Public Health  
Contact Robyn Dewis  
Our ref RD/NO

Date 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear Head Teachers,

Thank you for your continued support during this incredibly challenging time. We are entering another period of uncertainty and I wanted to take this opportunity to provide clarity on my previous advice from the 15<sup>th</sup> October. This advice is provided in response to the continuing high rates of COVID in the City and to continuing outbreaks within educational settings.

I wrote to you and to parents advising that children who were household contacts of positive cases should isolate whilst waiting for their PCR result; this advice is beyond current national guidance. I am able to provide this advice due to my statutory role as Director of Public Health, however I cannot require schools or parents to follow my advice. I am in continued communication with the Regional Schools Commissioner regarding this.

I am advising this approach as our current estimates are that around 40% of children who are household contacts will become positive. We know that around a third of positive cases do not have symptoms and so these children are at increased risk of attending school whilst positive. We have evidence of situations where siblings continue to attend school, their PCR is then positive, and the school has an increased number of cases following this exposure.

I have presented our analysis to colleagues in the Department of Education. Due to the high risk of infection in this group, when we ask children to isolate until the PCR result in this way, we lose fewer days of face-to-face education than if each child who is positive passes the infection to only one other child in school. Increasing PCR testing will also allow a more complete picture of variant spread, as it is PCR tests that undergo sequencing.

Today there is of course a new context to this advice. Individuals who are contacts of anyone infected with the new variant, Omicron, will be required to self-isolate as was previously required. It will take a few days for each positive sample to be tested further before we know whether it is the new variant and expect to see cases due to community spread in the coming weeks. To maintain face to face education in the run up to Christmas it is important that we reduce the risk of COVID as much as possible within the school setting.

---

**People Services, The Council House, Corporation Street, Derby, DE1 2FS**  
derby.gov.uk

To view Derby City Council Privacy Notices please visit [derby.gov.uk/privacy-notice](https://derby.gov.uk/privacy-notice)



It is possible that national guidance will be amended over coming days. However, based on the above information I ask that you give the following advice to families, and have included a letter for circulation:

- If your child has symptoms of COVID please isolate them at home and arrange a PCR test in line with national guidance. A lateral flow test is not sufficient in this case.
- **If you have a positive COVID case in the household, please arrange for all other household members to have a PCR test and keep your child at home until a result is received. Please do not take them to other clubs or social events during this time.**
- If the PCR is positive please follow national advice and isolate- this is required by law.
- If the PCR is negative your child can return to school, but if they are able please consider daily lateral flow testing for seven more days.
- Please continue using lateral flow tests regularly as a family, including parents and Secondary School aged children. Lateral flow tests can also be used by younger children if you feel happy and able to do this.
- Any positive lateral flow test must be confirmed with a PCR test in line with national guidance. Variants such as Omicron can only be detected through a PCR test.

I have also reminded families that if their child has had a positive COVID test in the past 90 days they do not need to retest unless they develop new symptoms.

We have had some enquiries regarding Christmas fairs and performances. I would encourage you to revisit your plans, in particular considering your business continuity, as any contact of an Omicron case will need to isolate even if fully vaccinated. As always, if you conclude that you cannot hold such events safely then you have our full support.

Please continue to communicate with us through the CCT inbox, including any additional measures you feel you would like to take, and the team will continue to discuss additional measures with you in the event of an outbreak in your school. We will continue to monitor the situation in schools weekly and respond to the situation in the City.

Yours sincerely



Dr Robyn Dewis  
Director of Public Health