

Date: 14 July 2021

Covid-19 update for parents and carers with children in education

Dear parents/carers,

We are writing to provide you with updated information and advice about the ongoing rise in Covid case numbers in South Gloucestershire, and the impact on schools, nurseries and colleges and children's learning.

We know how important face-to-face learning is for children's education and development and understand the impact that periods of home learning and lockdowns have had. We are keen for all children to be in school for the remainder of the summer term where possible, in line with Covid-19 guidance and restrictions.

However, there has been a recent significant increase in cases of Covid-19 in staff and children, as well as an increase in staff identified as close contacts through NHS Test and Trace, who then have to self-isolate. This has led to some schools having to return in part or full to remote learning. This has also impacted on schools' ability to identify supply teachers, meaning where teachers of a class or bubble are isolating pupils have had to stay at home as a substitute teacher cannot be found.

This is an unfortunate situation, but we wanted to reassure you that this is a last resort and is in line with national guidance and the legal framework for Covid-19.

Your child's nursery, school or college has stringent measures in place prevent Covid-19 infection and we ask you to continue to support them with these. These measures include:

- **Children, staff and other adults must not come into the school if they have been told to isolate by NHS Test and Trace, or they or a member of their household have symptoms of Covid-19 or have had a positive test: Reducing the number of contacts between children and staff through keeping groups separate (in 'bubbles') and through maintaining distance between individuals**
- **Ensuring everyone cleans their hands thoroughly and more often than usual**
- **Ensuring good respiratory hygiene for everyone promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach**
- **Maintaining enhanced cleaning, including frequently touched surfaces**
- **Minimising contact across the school and maintaining social distancing where possible**
- **Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated**

These measures will remain in place until at least 19 July and bubbles may continue until the end of the summer term and into the summer holidays in some settings which remain open. Each school or setting will make its own assessment based on their own risk assessments and will inform you of any changes.

You will be aware that on Monday 12 July, the Government confirmed its plans for lifting the remaining Covid-19 restrictions on 19 July, emphasising the need to proceed slowly and with caution and for the public to take personal responsibility to protect themselves and others through informed choice. We are urging extreme caution, and advising South Gloucestershire residents to continue to:

- Come forward when invited for both doses of the vaccine
- Wear a face covering in enclosed and crowded spaces where you come into contact with people you don't normally meet

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- Try to meet outdoors or in well-ventilated indoor areas
- Self-isolate and get a PCR test if you have symptoms
- Self-isolate if you test positive or are told to do so by NHS Test and Trace. This remains a legal requirement
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze
- Stay at home if you are unwell, to reduce the risk of passing any illnesses onto friends, family, colleagues, and others in your community
- Be considerate of others - take into account not only your own risks, but also of those around you, such as those with clinical vulnerabilities
- And finally, be kind, courteous and respectful of others. We have all been impacted in so many different ways and it is as important as ever that we work together to keep the virus under control, with everybody following the guidance and taking action to protect themselves and to protect others.

Thank you for your continued support and all your efforts to keep your child and community safe.

Yours sincerely,



Sara Blackmore,
Director of Public Health



Chris Sivers,
Director for Children, Adults and Health

www.southglos.gov.uk/coronavirus