

My ref: Autumn term parents letter
Date: 22nd October 2020
Contact: Please contact your school
for more information



To parents/carers of pupils in
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
Schools

People & Communities
Education Directorate

Dear Parent / Carer

Thank you for supporting your child's school since the beginning of the new term. The overwhelming majority of pupils are now attending school regularly, and many headteachers have told me how well pupils are settling in. There have been some new routines to get to grips with, but pupils, parents and staff have responded swiftly to these. This is benefiting pupils' learning and well-being.

Covid-19 in Schools

Every parent's top priority is the safety of their children. We are working closely with our schools to monitor COVID-19 cases and I know this remains a concern for you. At this time of year in particular, many of us pick up coughs and colds; sometimes the symptoms are similar to those associated with COVID. Most children with COVID-19 have at least one of three symptoms; a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste. In such cases – or if another person in your household has such symptoms - you should keep your child at home and arrange for a test for the person with symptoms. While waiting for the test result you should all stay at home. If anyone in the household gets a positive test result, they should stay at home for 10 days and the rest of the household should stay at home for 14 days. All positive cases in school age children must be reported to their school immediately. If your child is feeling ill with other symptoms, you should act in the same way as you would have done before the pandemic. We have prepared a 'quick guide' for parents, which you may find useful. It can be [downloaded here](#).

Over this first half term, we have supported schools in making appropriate decisions in line with government guidance in the case of confirmed cases of Covid-19 relating either to pupils or staff. Whilst the number of suspected cases are high, the number of confirmed cases remain low as a percentage of our school population at around 0.1%. No school has had to close fully as a result of Covid-19, unlike in other parts of the country. Our attendance figures are in the top 20% in the country.

All of our schools have protective measures in place to minimise the risk of the spread of COVID-19. In line with the government's advice, we would urge parents not to seek a test for their child unless they are showing possible symptoms. Doing so will place an additional burden on the testing system.

If there is a positive test, your child's school will write to inform you of this and report the case to the local authority. Schools will then follow a detailed contact tracing process that follows government guidelines, in order to make the school environment as safe as it can be for pupils and staff. In the unlikely event that your child, or someone else in your household, tests positive for COVID-19, you will be given advice about how long family members will need to

isolate for. We are supporting schools in this process to make sure appropriate and safe decisions are made about closing 'bubbles' or asking staff to isolate.

To support schools at this challenging time, we would ask you kindly to –

- Follow closely the rules relating to self-isolation – we have produced a guide for this which you can [find here](#).
- Ensure you adhere to the current government guidance including social distancing, the 'rule of six' and comply with the regulations around home visits in those areas of the country which are in the 'high' and 'very high' levels.
- Wear face coverings when on the school's site for the protection of staff and other pupils. We would also request you socially distance if you bring your children onto the school site.
- If your child is in Year 7 and above and accesses transport, please ensure they wear face coverings at all times unless they have a medical reason not to do so.
- If you are intending to leave the country during half term, please make sure you are aware of the restrictions that are in place on returning from certain locations. Families will need to isolate for 14 days after they return unless they have visited a country which is in a [travel corridor](#). This period of isolation is fixed regardless of whether you or your child has been tested.
- If your children attend a school where face coverings are worn in corridors and communal spaces, please ensure your children understand the guidance related to the use of face coverings.
- If your children have a positive Covid-19 test during the half term period, please notify the school immediately. For Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th, the school will need to undertake contact tracing within schools if the pupils were in attendance the previous week.

Monitoring the Position on Covid-19

I am working closely in conjunction with the Director of Public Health, Dr Liz Robin, to respond to any changes in the level of infection across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are currently at the 'medium' level. If the situation were to worsen, there are some specific tiers of responses for education which are part of the Government's 'contain' framework. If these are agreed locally as being needed, we will write to parents to outline the changes that are required.

Remote Learning

Schools have been working hard since lockdown to ensure that those children who are not in school have a suitable remote learning offer. Schools are expected to consider how to continue to improve the quality of their existing curriculum, for example through technology, and have a strong contingency plan in place for remote education provision by the end of September. The Department for Education expects schools to:

- use a curriculum sequence that allows access to high-quality online and offline resources and teaching videos linked to the school's curriculum expectations
- give access to high quality remote education resources
- select the online tools that will be consistently used across the school in order to allow interaction, assessment and feedback and make sure staff are trained in their use
- provide printed resources, such as textbooks and workbooks, for pupils who do not have suitable online access

- recognise that younger pupils and some pupils with SEND may not be able to access remote education without adult support and so schools should work with families to deliver a broad and ambitious curriculum

The offer in schools will vary depending on the school's approach to delivering its curriculum and the capacity it has to support children. Delivering both remote and classroom-based learning (in the case of isolation) will be challenging but I know schools are fully committed to doing what they can to support children.

Schools will communicate this offer to you when, and if, it is needed. It is really important that you engage with your children's schools and let them know if there are any issues. We appreciate that if this situation arises, it may present some challenges for you. We kindly ask for your support so that we can continue to provide high-quality education for your child during this time. Younger children in particular may need support in accessing online materials and staying focused with their remote learning. We ask that you help them as much as you can. At the same time, we don't expect you to watch your child all day, and we wouldn't expect parents/carers to get involved in remote lessons in place of our teachers. But, it would be really helpful if you can take an active role in your child's learning by asking them about their day and what they've learned.

This has been the most challenging half term we have had to face as an education system. I am sure you will join me to thank the brave staff of our schools across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, who have been at the front line throughout and are completely committed to ensure your children receive the support they need to flourish.

Thank you, again, for everything you are doing to support our pupils to make a success of their time now that they are back in schools.

Yours sincerely,



Jonathan Lewis
Service Director – Education
Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council

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Cllr Steve Count, Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr John Holdich OBE, leader of Peterborough City Council
Sue Baldwin, Regional School Commissioner, Department for Education
Gillian Beasley, Chief Executive – Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council