

My ref: Parent Letter – Autumn 2021
Date: 27th September 2021
Contact: Please contact your school
for more information



To parents/carers of pupils in
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
Schools and Colleges

Public Health
Education Directorate

Dear Parent / Carer,

The return of schools this autumn has, as expected, led to an increasing number of children and school staff testing positive for Covid-19. As a result, schools are working hard to balance safety with the need to ensure that children receive the education which they deserve.

All schools continue to ensure buildings are well ventilated and have enhanced cleaning regimes in place and children are encouraged to wash their hands well and regularly.

As parents/carers, you have a role to play in helping reduce the spread of the virus and ensuring classes and schools can remain open.

As you may know, the rules around self-isolation changed last month and it is no longer a requirement for anyone who is under 18 years and 6 months, or has had both doses of the vaccine, to self-isolate if they are a close contact of a positive case. Adults who have not had both doses of the vaccine still need to self-isolate. It is therefore important that everyone who is eligible for the Covid-19 vaccine, takes up the offer.

If you are identified as a close contact and you no longer need to self-isolate, you are advised to get a PCR test as soon as possible to establish whether you have been infected. One in three people with Covid-19 has no symptoms, so it's essential that you follow this advice even if you feel well.

There are other measures too which you can take to keep yourselves and others safe. These include:

- Washing your hands regularly and for 20 seconds at a time. Please encourage your children to do the same when they are at school.
- Meeting those you don't live with in well ventilated places as we know it makes it harder for the virus to spread.
- Wearing a face covering in shops, supermarkets, public transport and anywhere else where you may encounter lots of people in an enclosed space.
- If your child is over 12 years old, undertake lateral flow tests and encourage them to take the Covid-19 vaccine when it is offered in their school and complete the online consent form.

It remains the case that anyone with Covid-19 symptoms should book a PCR test as soon as possible and self-isolate. This is vital and along with vaccinations is one of the most effective things we can all do to stop the virus spreading. If your child has symptoms, please don't rely on lateral flow devices, PCR tests should always be used for people with symptoms. Lateral flow devices are only for people with no symptoms and are not suitable for children below secondary school age.

Pupils with symptoms should not attend school, given the potential risk to others. Headteachers can take the decision to refuse access to school to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with Covid-19 if they consider the pupil has symptoms.

Please remember that it is still a requirement to isolate whilst awaiting the results of a PCR test if you have symptoms. If you test positive, you are required to isolate for 10 days.

Schools are no longer responsible for tracing and contacting close contacts of positive cases within the community – this is now completed by NHS Test and Trace. If you are contacted by the national contact tracing service, please follow the advice that you receive.

Lots of support is available for people who need it whilst self-isolating, including payments for those who will lose income and struggle financially. Parents are also able to claim financial support if they need to self-isolate as a result of a child having symptoms or testing positive.

For more information about all of this support, please visit www.peterborough.gov.uk/selfisolationsupport or www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/selfisolationsupport

The increasing number of children and school staff testing positive is not unique to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, it is happening across the whole country. This is despite schools following national guidance and current public health recommendations.

All education establishments will have contingency arrangements in place to deal with a significant increase in cases and they will work closely with the Local Authority to step up measures where they are needed. This may include reintroducing temporary measures that you will be familiar with, including the wearing of face coverings and individual classes being ringfenced from other groups within the school in shared spaces.

Please do not be concerned if this happens at your child's school, it is to reduce the spread of infection and for children to continue with their education.

Where there are insufficient staff to safely operate the school, we will temporarily move children to remote learning. This will always be a last resort.

We want to keep your child's school open to ensure that their education remains uninterrupted. Please follow the advice in this letter as by doing so you will be helping to reduce the spread of the virus and keeping our schools open.

Most importantly, if you have symptoms of Covid-19 please isolate and get a PCR test. You must keep isolating until you get the result, and if it's positive isolate for 10 days. If you are aware of someone who is a close contact of a positive case, please encourage them to book a PCR test via the Government website: [Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-a-free-pcr-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus-covid-19)

Thank you once again for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,



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



Jyoti Atri
Director of Public Health
Cambridgeshire County Council and
Peterborough City Council

