

21st October 2021

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am writing to update you on our local COVID-19 offer to schools across Birmingham following the Press briefing by the Secretary of State for Health on 20th October 2021.

You may be aware of the extra control measures that your child's school would have introduced since the start of the Autumn term in response to increased infections. These include encouraging good handwashing, twice weekly LFD tests, staying at home if unwell or tested positive and taking the COVID-19 vaccines. They have also been reminding children to practice good hygiene by sneezing or coughing into their elbows or using and disposing of tissues properly, as the weather gets cooler.

The Council has worked with headteachers to produce local bespoke [school resources](#) to raise awareness within our schools

What to expect if there are COVID-19 infections at your child's school.

Schools are no longer required to identify close contacts of any cases of COVID-19 in their setting. If there is a confirmed case at school, they will send a "warn and inform" letter to let you know about it and provide general updates.

Pupils who have mixed closely with the confirmed case (in the same class or group of friends) or are contacts of a case due to contact outside school will be advised to have a PCR test. It is helpful if children who are close contacts remain at home until they receive a negative result as this helps to further reduce the risk.

If the school has a large outbreak, the public health advice will be based on a risk assessment and may include some or all of the following measures:

- Reducing mixing between year groups or classes.
- Introducing the use of face coverings in classrooms and communal areas for anyone age 11 and over.
- Cancelling large school gatherings such as assemblies, open evenings, scheduled sports events, residential school trips and school staff meetings.
- Moving to online learning.

These measures will be discussed and jointly agreed with the school, UKHSA, Department for Education, the Council's Education and Skills and Public Health teams using [the Department for Education's contingency framework](#).

I would encourage you to continue to work closely with your child's school and support them by following the advice given.

COVID-19 vaccinations

COVID-19 vaccinations are now available to everyone in Birmingham aged 12 years and over. It is very reassuring to see that the vaccines have helped to reduce the risk of serious illness or death, spreading infection and give protection from known variants.

I encourage you, if your child is aged 12-15 years, to consent to them receiving the vaccination at school as soon as it is offered.

The NHS is writing to parents to advise them about how their children will receive vaccines including when they miss a school appointment.

Please speak with a trusted professional or read the information available on [the NHS website](#) to support you in making Your decision. You may also wish to speak to your GP. For any young people aged 16-18 years, there are [several locations across the city](#) where they can walk-in and 'grab a jab'

Our school community has been amazing and continue to work incredibly hard to keep children, families, staff and visitors safe.

Thank you to everyone for your sacrifices and contributions to improving Birmingham's pandemic response.

Yours sincerely



Dr Justin Varney
Director of Public Health