

21 June 2021

Tel: 0151 666 5050

Dear Parents/Carers

In recent weeks, we have seen a rapid rise in Covid-19 cases in Wirral. Currently Wirral has rates of 121 per 100,000 population and is on an upward trajectory. The dominant strain of virus in the UK is called the Delta variant, evidence suggests that this variant spreads more easily than previous strains of the virus.

As a result, we are requesting that additional measures are brought into schools to slow down the spread of the virus. These controls may cause some disruption to end of year plans that normally take place. Activities such as transition, assemblies, proms and performances may need to be modified and alternative arrangements made. Educational visits may also be impacted by these additional measures. Schools will communicate with parents directly if any of their plans are impacted.

Face Coverings

From the 21st of June 2021, we are requesting staff and pupils in Year 7 and above wear face coverings indoors whilst in school, including in classrooms where social distancing cannot be maintained, with the exception of certain lessons such as PE. This is an additional measure to support schools to manage the increased risk of school-based transmission due to increasing cases and is fully supported by central government.

The purpose of wearing a face covering is to minimise the risk of transmitting the virus to other people if you are infectious but do not have symptoms. We know that up to 30% of people with COVID-19 do not experience symptoms, and everyone who has the virus will be infectious in the two days before their symptoms start, so wearing face coverings is one of a range of infection prevention and control measures that have been introduced in schools to protect pupils and staff.

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Exemptions for wearing face coverings are still in place and further information about exemptions can be found [here](#).

Any pupil who has one of the conditions on the exemption list will not be expected to wear a face covering whilst in school. Anyone communicating to someone who relies on lip reading will also be exempt from wearing a face covering.

We also continue to ask that parents and carers wear face coverings when dropping off and picking up children from school.

Testing

For parents/carers of children in Year 7 and above, we would like to remind you that both you and your children should be carrying out twice-weekly lateral flow tests at home. If that test is positive, you must immediately inform your child's school, your child must then be kept away from school and you must immediately book a PCR test. If the PCR is also positive, your child must self-isolate for 10 days. Anyone else in the household must also self-isolate. If the PCR test is negative, your child can return to school and all close contacts can stop isolating. Please note that lateral flow tests conducted at home are not suitable for testing anyone that has symptoms of COVID. Anyone that has symptoms of COVID should book a PCR test straight away.

Please note that some secondary schools in Wirral will be reinstating full on-site testing from now until the end of term. If this applies to your child, the school will let you know. We would ask you to please cooperate fully with your child's school if this is the case.

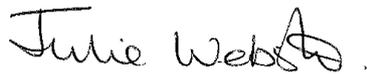
For those of you that have children that are younger than Year 7, we would like to remind you that twice-weekly lateral flow testing at home is not recommended for young children. This is because the tests can be unpleasant and upsetting for this age group and as such, often give unreliable results. If you live in a household with younger children, adults within that household can test themselves as an indicator of whether there is a likelihood of COVID being transmitted among the family. If anyone tests positive, the whole household should isolate immediately, inform your child's school and book a PCR test.

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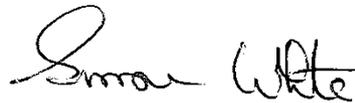
Please note that if you are in the position of needing to take time off work to look after a child who is self-isolating, you may be able to get some financial support. You can find more details and check your eligibility for this payment at: www.wirral.gov.uk/covidpayment. The payment scheme is being administered by Wirral Council and any queries can be directed to COVID19foodteam@wirral.gov.uk.

As always, we thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully



Julie Webster
Director of Public Health
Wirral Borough Council



Simone White
Director of Children's Services
Wirral Borough Council