milton keynes council

02 November 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Additional public health advice to reduce COVID-19 transmission in schools and colleges

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our schools and colleges. This is important to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people's education and to keep people safe.

Unfortunately, rates of infection among children and young people in Milton Keynes have increased to very high levels, so I am now **advising all schools and colleges** to put in place the following additional measures:

- **Mask wearing for all staff and visitors (including parents and carers) in all communal areas outside the classroom.**
- **Mask wearing for young people in Year 7 and above** (**Year 5 and above in Middle Schools) in all communal areas outside the classroom**, **and on school and public transport**.
- **Recommended 7 days of daily testing with LFD tests for children and young people in Year 3 and above when somebody else in the home has tested positive.** Spread of the virus in households is very common, even when people are vaccinated. (More information on how this works is provided at the end of this letter).
- **Children in Year 2 and below should continue to follow national guidance and take a PCR test if they are a household contact of someone who has tested positive.**
- **Schools and colleges are also being asked to try to reduce indoor gatherings and mixing between classes and year groups.** Schools and colleges will decide on what is appropriate for them, but it may include measures like virtual assemblies, staggered lunch and break times, and virtual meetings with parents/carers.

I will review the situation in mid-November, but it may be necessary to keep these measures in place until the end of term. I am mindful that some actions to control COVID-19 could have a negative impact on children's education and development, so I have chosen a set of measures that are important for limiting the spread of the virus, but have as little impact on education as possible.

It is important that we all continue to be cautious – including staying home and booking a PCR test if we have symptoms, wearing our masks in crowded places, and using LFD tests twice weekly or before we meet people. Can I please ask you to encourage and support:

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- **Young people in Years 7 and above to continue with routine, twice weekly lateral flow testing.**
- **Young people aged 12 and over to have their COVID-19 vaccination** through their school, at a local catch-up clinic, or by booking an appointment at a large vaccination centre. (Links to more information are provided at the end of this letter).

Thank you again for all you are doing to keep our children and young people healthy and safe.

Yours faithfully,

Vicky Head
Director of Public Health
Milton Keynes Council

Daily lateral flow testing for household contacts of a positive case:

- **Household contacts of a positive case who are in Year 3 and above are strongly encouraged to take a daily lateral flow test (LFT) before school or college for 7 days** and attend only if their lateral flow test is negative.
- Lateral flow tests should be taken for **7 days from the date of the first COVID-19 symptoms in the household**, or from the date of the first positive test if there were no symptoms.
- In addition to this, **all household contacts of a positive case are encouraged to follow national guidance and to take a PCR test**.
- Anyone who has tested positive with a PCR test within the last 90 days does **not need** to participate in daily LFD testing or take another PCR test.
- See link below for details of how and where to access LFD tests: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/

COVID-19 vaccination information and booking:

- More information about the vaccination programme is available from: https://www.blmkccg.nhs.uk/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine-information/
- Book an appointment at one of the large vaccination centres by visiting: https://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination or by calling 119.