

5th March 2021

Dear Parent or Carer

Safe return to school

We are delighted that all children and young people will be welcomed back into school next week, and we would like to thank you for helping to reduce the rate of infection of Covid in our communities. For many families returning to school will be an exciting time, but for others a worrying one. Whilst we need to reiterate that school attendance is mandatory, we want to reassure you that our schools are ready for the full reopening and are committed to keeping all children, staff and visitors safe.

Since your child was last in school there have been some important changes.

Face coverings

Wearing a face covering in **secondary schools** is now recommended in classrooms for pupils and staff where social distancing cannot be maintained, and when moving around the school. Face coverings are important as they help reduce the spread of the infection. Some children with certain health conditions may be exempt from wearing them.

Children in primary school do not need to wear a face covering. However, they will be worn by staff and adult visitors in situations where social distancing is not possible.

- **How you can help:** please support your school's policy on face coverings and help your child to understand why they need to wear a face covering and how to wear them properly. Also ensure that your child is replacing disposable face coverings daily or washing their fabric face covering after each day.

Rapid Testing (LFD testing)

Secondary school pupils will be asked to take part in testing regularly to help identify young people who have Covid but **do not** have symptoms or have not yet started to feel unwell. This will initially be in school then pupils will be given tests to take home and complete twice a week – 3-5 days apart.

Regular LFD testing followed by self-isolation breaks the chain of infection quickly and reduces the number of people who are potential contacts of the case. The tests are simple to do and results are known within 30 minutes.

- **How you can help:** Please encourage your child to complete the testing (in accordance with the guidance), continue to test regularly and report any positive results to school immediately.

Household testing

Members of households, childcare or support bubbles of school staff and pupils are also able to access LFD home testing kits. This can be done by going to a collection point to receive 2 packs of home test kits (each pack contains 7 tests).

Go to <https://find-covid-19-rapid-test-sites.maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk>, to find a collection point. If you are not able to access these collection points, then you can order kits to be delivered direct to your house. Go to www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests to order.

Tests should be undertaken twice weekly.

Full guidance can be found www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff.

- **How you can help:** As a household, take part in this important testing programme but remember, it is only designed to identify cases where there are **no symptoms**. If you have any Covid symptoms, please take book a test or order a home testing kit via [Get a free NHS test to check if you have coronavirus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) or call 119.

Other ways we need your help

- If someone in your household has classic Covid symptoms (high temperature, continuous cough, loss of taste or smell), and is waiting to be tested or for test results, **all household members must self-isolate until the results are known**. Do not send children into school or go into work yourself until the test result is known. If the result is positive, all household members must self-isolate for 10 days.
- If someone in your household has non-classic Covid symptoms, you are now able to book a COVID-19 test. In Salford we still want to rule out the possibility of COVID-19 and encourage people to get tested. This is because we can find people who are unwell with the virus even before they develop any of the three classical symptoms.

Non-classical symptoms include:

- Vomiting/nausea/off your food
- Diarrhoea
- Sleeping more than usual/extreme tiredness
- Listless/restless/agitated
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling cold
- Headache
- Severe body aches
- Sore throat
- Congested or runny nose
- Skin rash
- Complaining of anything that is not feeling themselves

Please note: anyone who is unwell with any of these 'non-classical' symptoms are **not expected to isolate immediately** but are strongly advised to go for a test to rule out COVID-19. Go to www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test and, when prompted, click the box that says "*My local council has asked me to get a test, even though I do not have symptoms*".

- **If you are a contact of someone who has tested positive for Covid, you have to self-isolate for 10 days from the last contact with the case.** It does not matter whether you have a test and you are negative, you must still self-isolate. If your child has been sent home from school as a contact, they must not leave the house or garden or see friends during this period. This will stop other people getting the infection if you or your child are developing the infection.
- **Do not have visitors into your home and do not visit others in their home.** We appreciate this is difficult especially when there have been life events; deaths, births or celebrations but this is so important to reducing the risk. Under current legal restrictions this is also illegal, and

you may be fined.

Parents or carers, please talk to your young people about the risks of socialising at this time and remind them about the health and legal impacts of this.

- **Reduce mixing of different households or families outside of the home too.** The weather is improving and we are all feeling excited by the lifting of lockdown rules over the next few months, however at the present time we are still in lockdown and reducing our contact with others is the best way to stop spread of the infection.
- Remember to wear face coverings, keep two metres apart from people not in your household and wash your hands regularly – all these actions reduce the spread of the infection.
- If you are a Salford resident aged 50 or over or if you are aged 16-65 in an at risk group, you should now start to receive you invite for your Covid 19 vaccination. Please come forward and book your appointment at www.salford.nhsvaccinations.co.uk or call 0800 9530116

We all know that ensuring our children get the education they deserve is important for their health and wellbeing, as well as their futures. We also need to protect our vulnerable families and friends.

There is no one way to prevent the spread of the infection. We all have to play our part and we are asking for your support so that we can together stop the spread of Covid, keep our children and families safe and keep our schools open to improve the lives of our children.

Yours faithfully



Charlotte Ramsden
Strategic Director, People



Muna Abdel Aziz
Director of Public Health



Councillor John Merry
Deputy City Mayor &
Lead Member for Children's
and Young People's Services



Councillor John Walsh
Executive Support Member
for Education and Learning