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Dear Parents and Carers

Message to residents from Dr Muna Abdel Aziz, Director of Public Health

This week has seen the start of the rollout of the first safe and effective coronavirus vaccine to health and social care staff and people over the age of 80 years. I am sure you joined with me in celebrating the first people to be vaccinated.

Next week we will be contacting groups of people over 80 years to make appointments at a neighbourhood testing hub. They will receive a second appointment a few weeks later which will provide the required level of protection against the virus.

Many of the obstacles to get the vaccine out into the community are being rapidly tackled – which is great news.

We have been monitoring the spread of the coronavirus in the city and although generally the number of cases has reduced, more recently this has started to slow down. In the first week of November, Salford's positive case rate was over 600 per 100,000 population. By the week ending 7 December, this rate was 133.7 per 100,000; now below the England average of 158.3. The reduction was the outcome of the very high restrictions on 23 October and the second lockdown from 5 November to 2 December, with reductions starting to dwindle as we returned to Tier 3. We need to bring down the numbers even further to protect each other and protect our loved ones.

I would like to thank our communities for actively following the rules, limiting their interactions with others, and avoiding household mixing. Your efforts will keep vulnerable people in our communities safer.

In Salford we are offering testing for non-typical symptoms to ensure that we catch COVID cases early amongst college and high school students and soon we will offer this to all residents. So if you feel unwell you will be able to rule out coronavirus quickly. We continue to advise full infection control precautions and that people with symptoms should book a test. This is because even a small outbreak in the community can trigger exponential spread.

I want to stress the need to be careful in shops as people return to the high street to buy Christmas gifts. Please avoid busy times and crowds; both in and outside shops, on public transport and avoid car sharing. Many shops are extending the hours they are open and I hope you can take advantage of this. Keep your distance from people you do not live with, and wear a face covering at all times.

Government will review the tiers on 16 December and will consider Greater Manchester against a number of measures. Looking across Greater Manchester, there are large differences between the areas with some authorities having much lower rates than others, and rates amongst those aged over 60 are around 123 per 100,000 people, above the national average of 114 per 100,000. The pressure on the local NHS remains high so is still a very real concern.

Salford's Health Protection Board is closely monitoring the spread of the virus. This week the board would like to thank local people for their efforts and sacrifices to bring down the number of cases and urges that **anyone who is unwell should stay at home and get tested**. The NHS is open, and if you need medical assistance you must seek support.

Now is the time to **follow even more carefully the guidance** on face coverings, social distancing and hand hygiene so you and your loved ones can stay well this winter.

As you confirm your plans for Christmas and decide whether to have a Christmas support bubble between 23 to 27 December, please consider how you can protect vulnerable people in your social and family group. **Just because you can have another two households in your home, it doesn't mean it is the right thing to do**; especially if you want to protect older members of your family and people with health conditions or disabilities.

The virus will still be circulating, and **we should be prepared to cancel plans at short notice** if someone becomes unwell or tests positive.

Every small change we make can have a huge impact.

School Information:

New testing offer to ALL pupils in schools

Regarding the letter from Salford City Council, can I clarify with parents that testing for COVID for 'non-classic' symptoms is advised but optional and that children do not need to self-isolate during this time. If your child or any household member has any of the 3 classic symptoms, they **MUST** not come to school and **MUST** self-isolate until the result of a test is received. Please continue to keep school informed of ANY reason for your child's absence.

FSM vouchers

Salford council has confirmed funding to support children eligible for FSM over the Christmas period (2 week break). Our school office will send communication to eligible parents regarding the collection of Aldi vouchers to the value of £30 per FSM pupil. Please only attend school at your allocated time and ensure that social distancing protocols are observed and face coverings are worn.

Christmas Closure

The DfE informed schools on Tuesday that they could make changes to the end of term closure date. We have decided, to limit disruption to you and our children, not to change these dates and will close on Friday 18th December as planned.

Thank you for your continued support

Mrs Emma Henderson

Headteacher