

Tina Russell
Interim Director of Children's
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Our Ref:TR/AS/jk

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Dear Parents and Carers,

You were sent a letter last week from Tina Russell, Interim Director of Children's Services and Dr Kathryn Cobain, Director of Public Health which appears to have caused some confusion for which we apologise.

This letter clarifies the latest COVID-19 arrangements for schools and colleges. Please use it as your reference to the current national guidance for educational settings.

Face coverings

As you know last Monday (17th) we entered into Step 3 of the national roadmap out of lockdown. There has been minimal change to the national schools' guidance other than the relaxation in the use of face coverings for secondary aged children in classrooms and communal areas and for staff in classrooms.

In allschools, the guidance continues to recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and visitors in situations outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas). **The guidance also states that the reintroduction of face coverings for pupils of secondary age, students or staff may be advised at a local level for a temporary period in response to particular localised outbreaks, including variants of concern.**

If a variant of concern was detected at your school, your school would be contacted by Worcestershire County Council for an Incident Management Team (IMT) meeting. At this meeting, the benefits and disadvantages of extended face covering use for secondary aged pupils and staff would be assessed and a joint decision with the school would be made.

Public Health also advises that face coverings are not a substitute for social distancing which must be maintained as minimising contacts and mixing, between people, reduces transmission and the impact of COVID-19.

Children and young people aged 11 and over must still wear a face covering on public transport. In accordance with advice from Public Health England, they must also wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated transport to secondary school or college. This does not apply to children and young people who are exempt from wearing face coverings.

Lateral Flow Testing (LFT)

Lateral Flow Testing also known as Rapid Testing, used for people without symptoms, detects positive cases quickly, meaning people can isolate immediately.

All secondary schools and colleges are offering their pupils and students COVID-19 Rapid Testing to carry out at home, and we encourage you to continue to do this.

All pupils and students should attend school or college whether they take part in testing or not.

In Worcestershire, from Tuesday June 1st, children aged two and above will be able to have a Lateral Flow Test at a participating pharmacy. The list of [participating pharmacies can be found here](#)

This is available at parents' discretion and our recommendation is that current guidance regarding regular Lateral Flow Testing is followed. PHE has advised there are currently limited public health benefits attached to testing primary pupils with lateral flow devices. However, it is important that Secondary School students, teachers and adult aged members of households and support bubbles with school/nursery aged children continue to access Lateral Flow Testing regularly, ideally twice per week.

You can [get a rapid test at a rapid lateral flow test site](#) or [order tests to do at home](#).

If you would like any more help or advice around COVID-19, please go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> or visit

https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20769/coronavirus_covid-19

Yours sincerely,



Tina Russell
Interim Director of Children's Services



Dr Kathryn Cobain
Director of Public Health