

**Ealing Council
 Perceval House
 14-16 Uxbridge Road
 London W5 2HL**

29th November 2021

Dear Headteachers,

Public Health advice to reduce COVID-19 transmission in schools

Further to my letter dated 19th November, the covid situation in schools has evolved, firstly with primary school children now having the highest case rates in the borough (the rates in primary school children have more than doubled since half term) and secondly with the government over the weekend announcing measures in schools in response to the Omicron variant.

1) Government requirements (as of 29th November)

The government has temporarily reintroduced face coverings in schools:

- In **high schools**, face coverings should now be worn by pupils, staff and adult visitors when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas. Pupils in these schools should also wear a face covering when travelling on public transport and dedicated transport to and from school.
- In **primary schools**, face coverings should now be worn by staff and adults (including visitors) when moving around in corridors and communal areas. Health advice continues to be that children in primary schools should not be asked to wear face coverings.

Contact tracing

All individuals who have been identified as a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, irrespective of vaccination status and age, will be contacted directly and required to self-isolate immediately and asked to book a PCR test. They will be informed by the local health protection team or NHS Test and Trace if they fall into this category and provided details about self-isolation.

Travel

All travellers arriving into the UK will need to isolate and get a PCR test by 'day two' after arrival. They may end their isolation once they receive a negative result. If the result is positive, they should continue to isolate and follow [rules on isolation](#) following a positive test. Unvaccinated arrivals aged over 18 will follow the existing, more onerous, testing and isolation regime. All Red list arrivals will enter quarantine. All people travelling to England must adhere to [travel legislation](#), details of which are set out in government [travel advice](#).

Educational visits

Schools should consider whether to go ahead with planned international educational visits at this time, recognising the risk of disruption to education resulting from the need to isolate and test on arrival back into the UK. Schools should refer to the [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office travel advice](#) and the [guidance on international travel](#) before booking and travelling.

2) Local response in schools

We are expecting rates in school children to continue to rise over the Winter period, and therefore we have also reviewed our local response in schools.

We have consulted with head teacher representatives on additional measures we should take across Ealing schools, to help control the infection rate and maintain education for our children. Similar measures are being advised in schools across several boroughs in London.

We are proposing simple additional measures that all schools can encourage families to implement. It is important to note that these measures are in addition to DfE guidance, and are being recommended due to increasing rates and to support students and schools to continue with in-person education up to the Christmas holidays. It is therefore up to parents to make individual family

decisions on whether to implement this advice. Some of these measures may already be implemented for a time limited period in schools which have met DfE thresholds and are following LCRC's amber or red measures.

Testing in a covid positive household

When a member of a student's household has tested positive, we recommend that schools encourage household members attending primary or secondary school to undertake 7 days of daily testing with lateral flow tests. Lateral flow tests can be ordered online: [Order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests). LFTs should be taken for 7 days from the date of COVID-19 symptoms started in the household or from the date of the first positive test if there are no symptoms. In addition, all household members should be encouraged to undertake a PCR test. Covid is commonly spread amongst a household, even in those who are vaccinated.

Please note that anyone who has had a positive PCR result within the last 90 days should not get a further test unless they have developed symptoms.

Limiting social/non-essential activity in covid positive households

When a member of a student's household has tested positive, we recommend that you encourage the family to limit social or non-essential activity outside of the school day for 10 days from the date of the first positive test if there are no symptoms or 10 days from the date that COVID-19 symptoms started in the household. This includes playdates, sports, parties, and any extracurricular activities. This will help to reduce ongoing transmission across the borough.

Risk assessing for school events and day trips

Schools are advised to undertake a risk assessment prior to in-person events such as open days and parents' evenings. Schools have adapted to enable events to go ahead through the use of ticketing, smaller groups, encouraging use of face coverings and adhering to baseline covid measures. Schools are also advised to undertake a risk assessment prior to taking any day trips.

Please note, schools which have reached DfE thresholds and are under LCRC amber measures are unable to go ahead with in-person school events or day trips. Schools that have reached DfE thresholds and are under LCRC green measures will need to discuss their event plans or day trips with LCRC and the Local Authority on a case-by-case basis.

Given the Omicron variant, we expect that the situation will be fast evolving, and our risk assessment may therefore change at short notice and require the implementation of additional measures. We will continue to review the local position and we will consult with headteacher representatives should the situation change.

Thank you for all your support as we continue to work to keep Ealing safe.

Yours sincerely,



Anna Bryden

Director – Public Health, London Borough of Ealing