

Dear School and College Leaders,

We want to thank you for how you have all worked tirelessly over the last 18 months to keep your schools and communities safe and also acknowledge that this phase of the pandemic, has been particularly challenging. Although we are making great progress in weakening the chain of transmission with the large majority of adult population doubled jabbed and the beginning of the vaccine rollout for 12 – 15 year-olds, there is still a high risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Our infection rate in Suffolk is currently above the national average and also one of the highest in the East of England. Fifty-seven percent of new cases in Suffolk in the last 14 days are in the 0 – 19 year age group, with rising rates particularly evident in the 10 – 19 year age group. Case rates in the 10 – 14 year age group are of particular concern, with 2,018 cases per 100,000 population as of 4th October 2021. This rate puts Suffolk in the top 20% of upper tier local authorities nationally (29th out of 147) and represents a week-on-week case rate increase of 24.7%.

We know the current situation is putting considerable pressure on schools and preventing the onward spread of COVID-19 within our education settings is becoming increasingly challenging. We want all children and young people to be in school; however, the number of positive cases is high, resulting in missed education. In some education settings, up to a third of pupils have become infected. Suffolk has not seen this infection rate before, which is a significant increase compared to the previous academic year.

Suffolk's Director of Public Health, Stuart Keeble, with the support of Suffolk's Director of Children and Young Person Services, Allan Cadzow, have agreed on additional control measures for education settings who are managing an active outbreak Which will be implemented from Wednesday 6th October 2021.

Children & young people who are close contacts of siblings who have tested positive

Any pupil aged between the ages of 4 and 18 (unless exempt – see below) who is a sibling of a positive pupil (living in the same household) will be advised to stay at home if the school the positive pupil attends has met the thresholds described in the Contingency Framework for outbreak management.

Currently, schools and colleges are advised to contact their Local Authority for advice when reintroducing control measures, Suffolk County Council's CYP COVID-19 Support Team will advise when this additional control measure applies to your setting and will provide you with letters to send to all parents advising them that this additional control measure now applies.

Siblings should be supported with online learning by their school. From day 3 following the positive PCR of the sibling who has tested positive, the household siblings should get a PCR test. If this is negative and the child feels well, they can return to the setting, but should isolate immediately and get another test if they develop symptoms of COVID-19 later.

- Any child/young person aged 4–18 who has tested positive for COVID19 themselves via a PCR test within the past 90 days (this guidance applies to children aged 4 attending Reception. Early Years setting are excluded)

Children and young people exempt from this advice and able to continue to attend their education setting if either of the following apply;

- 12 – 18 year-olds who have had at least one dose of the vaccine more than 14 days ago
- Anyone aged between 4 – 18 who has tested positive for COVID-19 themselves via a PCR test within the past 90 days and has completed their isolation
- Those who are medically exempt from vaccination as determined by their clinician

Any parents or carers who still want their child to continue to attend school have the right to send their child into the setting. In these situations, the child or young person is strongly advised to produce a negative PCR test and continue to undertake a daily Lateral Flow Test for four days and attend school only if negative.

Anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19, or feels unwell, should continue to get a PCR test, and stay at home. Individuals informed by Test & Trace to isolate should stay at home for the time advised.

This additional control measure will be in place from 6th October 2021 and will be reviewed in the week starting 18th October 2021. Please continue to complete the online Local Authority form where you are notified of positive case and contact the CYP COVID-19 Support Team for advice and support via CYPC19@suffolk.gov.uk

We thank you for your continued support in helping to keep the people of Suffolk safe and well as we all learn to live with COVID19.

Yours Sincerely



Stuart Keeble
Director of Public Health



Allan Cadzow
Director for Children and Young People's
Services