



Thursday 6th May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

COVID 19 – Planning for the Summer Term

Thank you for all that you are continuing to do to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19. As the national roadmap is taken forward Sheffield is in a good place to start to ease restrictions and that's due to all the things you and your family are doing.

We want to do all that we can to 'Keep Sheffield Open' and over the coming weeks we will start to have more opportunities to see our friends and family and do some of those things we have been greatly missing.

You may be wondering why it is that early years and school settings continue to have to operate in a COVID-19 secure way when other restrictions are gradually lifting. Many of you are also no doubt hoping to see the usual end of summer term events happen and have opportunities for transition events as pupils get ready to move on to new schools in September.

However, it's really important that your child's school and early years setting continues to do all it can to reduce COVID-19 transmission and this requires them to continue to operate with all the COVID-19 measures in place. This means that schools should be continuing with measures such as 'bubbles' and not having whole school events for the time being. This is because:

- Whilst COVID-19 case rates are reducing across the city we still have the difficult balance of easing some restrictions, keeping transmission of COVID low and protecting everyone from what continues to be a dangerous virus.
- We are getting as many people vaccinated as possible and this is progressing well locally in line with the national criteria for vaccination. However, we know that children and young people are not vaccinated. Also, most parents/carers at this time who are under the age of 40 years will not yet be vaccinated. This means that having large events in school and mixing of adults and children would continue to enable COVID-19 to circulate. We have to ask if these events are needed at this time or if they can still be done using other methods e.g. virtually.
- Alongside this the most common sort of COVID-19 in this country now is the B.1.1.7 (Kent) variant which spreads more easily, and this is also true in Sheffield. This means that if we do get cases of COVID-19 there is a risk that it does pass from one person to another more quickly.

Removing restrictions too quickly across an unvaccinated group could risk case rates going up quickly with a likely impact on schools and workplaces. And, as with schools, restrictions continue to remain in place for many other settings and workplaces.

In order for us to keep moving forward, the easing of restrictions needs to continue at a safe and careful pace. We also want to be in a good place as autumn approaches and your patience and understanding is important. Thank you for all that you are doing and

the support which you are giving to your child's school/setting. This is making a difference and your actions are really helping to see our case levels fall.

There may be new national guidance published soon for schools/settings and when this is available we will again look at how this changes things. I will then write to you again. At this time our plans remain the same and schools/settings will continue to operate COVID-19 secure measures as they have been doing.

You should continue to do all the things you are already familiar with to reduce COVID-19 in your community:



If you get symptoms, or test positive with a rapid LFD test, you **must** self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test online at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119.

Financial support is available for those who have to self-isolate, including parents and guardians of self-isolating children. For more details, and to apply, go to <https://bit.ly/scc-covid-support>

For more information on Covid tests, please go to <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/your-city-council/coronavirus-hub/coronavirus-testing>

Yours sincerely

Greg Fell
Director of Public Health, Sheffield