

Debbie Watson
Interim Director of Population Health

PO BOX 317
Ashton under Lyne, OL6 0GS

Switchboard 0161 342 5500

www.tameside.gov.uk
e-mail : Debbie.watson@tameside.gov.uk

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Ask for Debbie Watson
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Dear Parents/ Carers,

Advice to all parents and carers of secondary school pupils attending Tameside schools

Supporting Schools during COVID-19

Tameside Council's Public Health Team is working closely with our schools to reduce the number of COVID-19 cases and ensure our schools can remain open and children can continue to access in-person education. We are writing to you to advise you about some new measures we are introducing in schools for at least the next four weeks, and we will be reviewing these for the new term starting Monday 1 November 2021. We would also like to share some key messages with you. The number of cases across our communities has increased over the last few weeks, in particular in young people aged 12-17yrs, and we are asking for your support.

Face Coverings in Schools

From Tuesday 19th October, Tameside Public Health Team will be asking secondary aged children and staff to wear face coverings when moving around. Face coverings lower the risk of spreading the virus if someone has the virus but does not have symptoms. Pupils will not need to wear face coverings while sat at their desks in classrooms, eating or whilst outside.

LFD Testing for Household Contacts

Since August, adults who are double vaccinated and children do not need to self-isolate if they live with someone who has COVID-19.

We are asking all students and staff members **who live with someone who has COVID-19** to do daily lateral flow tests (LFD test) before coming into school (unless exempt-see below). Pupils should start this testing from the day their household member either became **unwell with COVID-19 or tested positive** if they did not have symptoms and continue this for 10 days.

Please remember:

- if your child tests negative, they can continue attending school.
- if your child has a positive LFD result, they must start isolating, have a PCR test and inform school.

- if they develop COVID-19 symptoms, they should book a PCR test. It is important that people with COVID-19 symptoms do not rely on a negative LFD test and they should have a PCR test. If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must not come to school and should remain at home.

Exemptions to Household LFD Testing

The groups exempt from this advice are:

- Any child who cannot tolerate daily testing, for example children aged 5 yrs and under, in Key Stage 1, or those with special educational additional needs.
- Any child, aged between 5 – 16 yrs, who has tested positive for COVID-19 via a PCR test within the past 90 days.

Routine LFD Asymptomatic Testing

We strongly encourage families to test at home twice a week and to register their results, even when negative. This important testing helps to pick up the infection early, preventing further spread, keeping families, friends and schools protected from COVID-19.

Positive Cases in School

If your child is a close contact of a case in school, please book them in to take a PCR test as soon as possible (unless they have had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days).

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must not come to school and should remain at home. They must get a PCR test as soon as possible and isolate until the result is available. People who get a positive PCR test must continue to isolate as usual.

Reinforcing Face Covering during Travel

We would like to strongly recommend that children who use public transport, (trains, trams and buses) wear a face covering during this journey. Please also remind them to sanitise hands at the beginning and end of every journey. Face coverings are also important when car sharing with people they do not live with.

How to Stop COVID-19 Spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19:

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- try to meet people who you don't live with outdoors
- allow ventilation in the house through opening windows
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands), when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- Participate in twice-weekly LFD testing following national guidelines (recommended for 11 years and over). Order LFD tests for your household, visit www.nhs.uk/get-tested. We encourage you to log your results here: www.gov.uk/report-COVID-1919-result
- have the COVID-19 vaccination if eligible, ensuring that if over 16 years you have both doses.

Further Information

Further information is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-COVID-19/>

We understand how disappointing and frustrating it is to have to introduce these measures and share these messages again. We will shortly be coming into winter, a time when we really need to be keeping people safe and reducing the number of COVID-19 infections. Our aim is to maximise the number of children in face-to-face education or childcare and minimise any disruption in a way that best manages the COVID-19 risk.

Thank you again for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Debbie Watson
Interim Director of Population Health