Information

Sheet Number:

**2017/21/197**

Providing support for County Councillors

for County Councillors

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| From: | Alison Bell |

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| Relevant SLT Director and sign-off date: | Trudi Grant  15 October 2021 |

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| Date: | 15 October 2021 |

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| To: | All County Councillors |

**Covid-19 Transmission in Educational Settings**

Case rates in 11-16 year olds are, for many local areas, the highest ever identified. Pressure on local and regional teams is significant and many areas are dealing with large numbers of school outbreaks. There is early evidence that case rates in this group are starting to stabilise and early indications from the Department for Education’s (DfE) published attendance data suggests the same.

The current level of case rates, the number of outbreaks in settings and staff sickness are all impacting on attendance and causing educational disruption. Directors of Public Health, through the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) shared their concerns with DfE regarding the current National Contingency Framework [Managing coronavirus (COVID-19) in education and childcare settings - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings) This framework describes a graduated response of control measures for schools to put in place, to control the spread of Covid-19.

DfE has now updated the contingency framework to reflect the position for children and young people previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable no longer needing to shield and details on when increased Covid-19 testing can be recommended by Directors of Public Health.

**Recently, and due to ongoing concerns around negative PCR results after testing positive on a lateral flow device; the advice, particularly for school or college aged children, their parents and those working in education is if you tested positive on LFD and subsequently tested negative on PCR, prior to the 13 October, we strongly recommend you isolate and get a further PCR test to ensure you have not got Covid-19.**

SCC Public Health and the UK Health Security Agency have been working with Somerset Schools and Colleges and SCC PH have run training sessions and set up a toolkit [COVID-19 School Toolkit | Support Services for Education](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.supportservicesforeducation.co.uk%2FPage%2F18903&data=04%7C01%7CJTowle%40somerset.gov.uk%7Cce60813c9355456f90ba08d972c3d997%7Cb524f606f77a4aa28da2fe70343b0cce%7C0%7C0%7C637667007771444530%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=rpS5rtsXYSUvdqh4dBDVMf8IFgBJmDaLQuSrK940Fw0%3D&reserved=0) that is accessible to all schools’ staff to help them respond to cases. Additionally, the Public Health response team continue to work with schools on an individual basis when they have cases, to undertake a risk assessment and put in place necessary control measures.

SCC PH advice remains consistent with national guidance:

* Only use twice weekly LFD testing for asymptomatic cases
* Make sure you do an LFD test **according to the instructions and at least 30 minutes before or after eating or drinking**
* If you get a positive LFD test or have symptoms, self-isolate and get a PCR. **Use the supervised PCR testing route at test centre to get the best quality test**
* If children have symptoms and get a negative PCR, they should stay off school until symptoms resolve. They are infectious for something else that will spread in school and contribute to absence
* Encourage secondary school age children to wear face coverings in crowded or enclosed places, for example on school transport
* Take up the offer of vaccination

The Somerset County Council Covid-19 Toolkit, includes training, resources and tools published on the Support Services for Education website [COVID-19 School Toolkit | Support Services for Education](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.supportservicesforeducation.co.uk%2FPage%2F18903&data=04%7C01%7CJTowle%40somerset.gov.uk%7Cce60813c9355456f90ba08d972c3d997%7Cb524f606f77a4aa28da2fe70343b0cce%7C0%7C0%7C637667007771444530%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=rpS5rtsXYSUvdqh4dBDVMf8IFgBJmDaLQuSrK940Fw0%3D&reserved=0).

Alongside the toolkit, weekly Public Health Covid news updates are sent to all Somerset schools via the schools’ bulletin and published on the SSE website.

* Outbreak management training presentation
* Template letters for communication to parents
* Single Case Flowchart
* [Local Outbreak Management Template](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fextranet.somerset.gov.uk%2FEasysiteWeb%2Fgetresource.axd%3FAssetID%3D141039%26type%3Dfull%26servicetype%3DAttachment&data=04%7C01%7CAZBell%40somerset.gov.uk%7Cd5e8b83a0e0040362a1a08d96f1b2907%7Cb524f606f77a4aa28da2fe70343b0cce%7C0%7C0%7C637662984705829076%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=XOFfPLwATlWs94WkL%2Fexjj9KZC8PxdZvZF4CmAwNElI%3D&reserved=0)
* [Covid-19: new posters from Somerset Public Health to help people through the testing process | Support Services for Education](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.supportservicesforeducation.co.uk%2FArticle%2F86773%3Fdm_t%3D0%2C0%2C0%2C0%2C0&data=04%7C01%7CJTowle%40somerset.gov.uk%7Cce60813c9355456f90ba08d972c3d997%7Cb524f606f77a4aa28da2fe70343b0cce%7C0%7C0%7C637667007771474396%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=yG2ev4mpn%2B3ERxh8i2DiwAo1DgF4qdFBIvZe1c%2B4Isg%3D&reserved=0)
* [Somerset Public Health Schools Outbreak Management session recording 31 August 2021 - YouTube](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3D9Q7yKtjxTGs&data=04%7C01%7CJTowle%40somerset.gov.uk%7C9aa936ad90074a20fa8408d9721498b3%7Cb524f606f77a4aa28da2fe70343b0cce%7C0%7C0%7C637666255044017864%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=ykq1cDjbVrPMvfP7yxuIv5iYkjDR3PHZjOk5E%2FtRZ80%3D&reserved=0)

Educational staff are doing a fantastic job, working relentlessly to try and ensure children and young people can access their education. Keeping lines of communication open in this challenging time is vital to maintaining confidence in the protective measures that are advised and protecting the well-being of staff and pupils.

Regardless of the increasing demand, the SCCPH team make every effort to respond to schools the same day and have plenty of capacity to offer support to all affected schools via [sccphincidentroom@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:sccphincidentroom@somerset.gov.uk) .

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