

06 September 2021

PO Box 532
Manchester
M60 2LA

Contact: Amanda Corcoran
Director of Education

Email: amanda.corcoran@manchester.gov.uk

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Preparations for the new school year

Firstly, we want to say thank you for your continued support in the fight against Covid-19 and we hope you and your families managed some time to relax over the summer break.

With pupils across the city returning to schools and colleges this week, the city council has been working closely with schools to finalise what measures need to be in place for the academic year.

We know that teachers and staff are looking forward to welcoming children and young people back and we would like to thank them for all their hard work in carefully planning and reviewing existing safety measures, ensuring that they are ready for the new school year.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is far from over, we are beginning to see a very gradual return to normality in our city. We must all keep taking the necessary measures and precautions to help limit the spread of COVID-19, including having both vaccinations. If you're yet to have yours, we urge you to do so.

We know as parents and carers you put a great value on school and education and as we recover from the pandemic our focus remains that children and young people across the city get back to school safely so they can be supported to learn and achieve alongside their peers.

There are three key changes in schools from the autumn term:

- 1.** Keeping pupils in a year group or classroom bubbles to reduce mixing is no longer required.
- 2.** Close contacts will be identified via NHS Test and Trace, rather than the school (although they may seek information from the school).
- 3.** Face coverings are no longer mandatory for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. However, face coverings are still expected and recommended for young people aged 11 and over (unless exempt) on public transport.

Every school, college and childcare setting has completed an extensive risk assessment and put in place infection control measures to reduce the risk to everyone. These measures include good hygiene and ventilation. They also have outbreak management plans describing what they would do if children or staff test positive for coronavirus, or how they would operate if they were advised to reintroduce any additional measures to help stop the spread of the virus. The Manchester Public Health and Manchester Test and Trace teams will continue to support schools to manage situations where there is an outbreak of positive cases.

Changes to self-isolation rules

Under the new national arrangements, anyone who has been identified as a close contact of a positive case of Covid-19 will no longer have to self-isolate - this applies to children who are not displaying symptoms and adults who have been fully vaccinated (14 days after their second jab) and are also not displaying any symptoms. Instead, they will be advised to take a PCR test as soon as possible and anyone who tests positive will still need to self-isolate regardless of their vaccination status or age.

It continues to be important that you do not send your child into school should they develop symptoms, however mild.

Asymptomatic Testing

Secondary schools and colleges will carry out two lateral flow device tests for every pupil in year 7 and above, 3 to 5 days apart, on their return in the autumn term. Please follow the guidance provided to you by your school/college. Secondary aged pupils and college students should continue to test at home twice a week.

Parent FAQ leaflets

The Department for Education (DfE) leaflets below link to some of the most frequently asked questions you may have in relation to the return to school. · [Early Years leaflet](#) · [Primary School leaflet](#) · [Secondary School and Colleges leaflet](#)

We all know the last 17 months have been especially tough for our children and young people. If you are worried about your child returning to the classroom, we encourage you to contact your school or college directly to discuss any specific concerns or queries.

Yours sincerely



Amanda Corcoran
Director of Education



David Regan
Director of Public Health for Manchester