



Solihull
METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

To: Parent / Carer

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SKILLS

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Your Ref.

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Date: 25 September 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

Update – Covid-19 and schools

There are a number of things we want to update you on as we continue to deal with this ever changing situation. In Solihull our number one priority remains the safety of our residents and we are working hard to ensure this. School leaders in Solihull continue to work tirelessly to keep their schools open and pupils attending safely and able to learn.

We have led a collaborative approach across the borough, so that as far as possible, wherever your child attends school the actions and priorities are the same. This is why we have produced standardised guidance, letters, action flowcharts and a considerable bank of resources for schools to use. All schools in Solihull have worked with us on these.

For those of you who have had a positive case, or cases, reported in your child's school, the process that school leaders are following is within our consistent framework. In practice though, the specific actions that a school takes may be different according to the unique circumstances of the case and the constraints of the school building and site.

On confirmation of a positive case, the head teacher or other senior leader contacts Public Health England to notify them. Advice and guidance is given and the school will be told what action will need to be taken. The whole school community will then receive a letter informing you of this, so that you can be vigilant about risks and support the actions being implemented. Isolation of pupils as a precautionary measure is having the biggest impact on the education system, but this action will only be taken if it is necessary to stop transmission. A helpful summary guide is attached to help explain the actions which schools are having to take.

Education will not stop if your child is told to isolate. The school will provide online learning for the period of isolation. This can be delivered in a variety of ways and will depend on your child's age and the software the school has available. This transition to remote learning should be immediate.

The good news from government this week is that informal childcare can still be arranged using grandparents or other family members. I am sure this is welcome news to allow parents to continue to work if their child needs to isolate.

Despite Solihull being an area of increased restrictions we are confident in our schools and their leaders. Every school has undertaken a robust and rigorous risk assessment. These are being reviewed regularly as guidance changes and situations evolve. Schools remain safe places for children and it is really encouraging to see attendance levels remaining high across the authority. There will be positive cases in our school communities: that is inevitable and the important thing is how the school then handles this to avoid further transmission.

We cannot emphasise enough the importance of abiding by the government restrictions around isolation, social distancing, particularly at the school gate, and protective measures when your children aren't in school – including the use of face coverings for secondary aged pupils and robust hand hygiene. This will further support the measures being put into place in schools and will ultimately drive down the rate of transmission of the virus. It really is important to avoid mixing households or meeting outside in groups of more than six people.

There has always been a strong sense of community here in Solihull and by working together we can reduce the time that this virus is with us and limit its impacts on our families, our children's education, our health and our livelihoods.

Thank you for your continued support of the measures we are taking in partnership with school leaders to keep everyone safe.

Yours sincerely



Louise Rees
Director of Children's Services & Skills