



South Tyneside Council

Date: 26th November 2021
Ref: TH/BS/LB

Dear Head Teacher

COVID-19 Measures in Schools

Thank you for continuing to review your measures over the past few weeks. We are pleased to see that the case rates in school aged children have nearly halved since our last update and our overall case rates are coming down.

It's important to note that the overall rates are reducing slowly and although they are not as low as they were at the start of September, we feel that the measures can be relaxed from next week until the end of term, unless an urgent situation arises.

We are advising that schools continue to take a sensible and cautious approach, and if you reach an outbreak situation in the coming weeks, we will be happy to work with you and your school staff to consider whether increased measures need to be stood up for a limited time. These measures will be based on your risk assessment and could include switching to alternative arrangements for Christmas events you may have planned such as virtual nativity plays etc. so that schools, pupils, and parents/carers can still enjoy these occasions. The recent Secretary of State for Education letter emphasised the need for control measures such as testing, and the vaccine offer which I know you all are actively promoting which will help to maximise school attendance and limit disruption as much as possible. You may also wish to still ask staff members and secondary school pupils to continue wearing their face coverings in congested areas, especially when moving around the buildings, and on public or shared transport to and from schools.

If you are holding events in school or inviting external visitors, you may want to ask them to do a Lateral Flow Test ahead of their visit and wear a face covering on arrival and during the event.

Other measures could include sanitising hands on entering the school, keeping the hall well ventilated and spacing people out as much as possible.

The vaccination offer is an important measure and pupils aged 12-15 who may not have taken up the offer previously as well as any parents /carers can still book their Covid vaccine online [Book your vaccine https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/book-or-manage-a-1st-or-2nd-dose-of-the-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination/or via 119](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/book-or-manage-a-1st-or-2nd-dose-of-the-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination/or-via-119).

Please also remember to place your order for Lateral Flow Tests well in advance of the holidays.

We will continue to monitor and review the data over the coming weeks and into the New Year and will refresh the advice once schools return for the new term.

Once again, thank you for your continued efforts and we hope you have a Merry Christmas and a well-earned rest over the festive period.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Hall", with a horizontal line drawn above the text.

Tom Hall
Director of Public Health

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Scanlon", written in a cursive style.

Beverley Scanlon
Head of Learning and Early Help