

Dear Parents and Carers,

RE: Suffolk's actions to reduce COVID-19 transmission in education settings

Firstly, we thank you as we recognise the pandemic has been more than challenging and continues to disrupt life and education. Schools and other education settings are working exceptionally hard to manage local cases and outbreaks.

Although we are making significant progress in weakening the chain of transmission; through the vaccination of adults and the roll out of the vaccine programme for 12 – 15 year-olds, COVID-19 is still present in Suffolk.

Case rates in Suffolk are currently high, and it is necessary to introduce additional local actions to break the chain of transmission and protect education settings from outbreaks.

We want all children and young people to be in school; however, the number of positive cases is high, resulting in missed education. In some education settings, up to a third of pupils have become infected. Suffolk has not seen this infection rate before, which is a significant increase compared to the previous academic year. While 10 – 18 year-olds are likely to experience mild disease, the number of cases we see in this age group increases the risk of infection in the broader community.

Suffolk's Director of Public Health, Stuart Keeble, with the support of Suffolk's Director of Children and Young Person Services, Allan Cadzow, have agreed on additional control measures for education settings who are managing an active outbreak.

From Wednesday 6 October 2021 children and young people who live with a sibling who has tested positive;

- Suffolk's children and young people aged between 4 and 18 years (unless exempt - see below) are now advised to stay at home when a sibling they live with, who attends an education setting with an outbreak tests positive for COVID-19.
- All siblings who live in the same house as the positive case should get a PCR test from the third day following the initial positive PCR. If this comes back as negative and the siblings feel well, those siblings can return to their education setting.
- If any sibling develops symptoms, they should isolate immediately and take another PCR test.
- If any sibling tests positive, they should isolate immediately.

Children and young people exempt from this advice and able to continue to attend their education setting if either of the following apply;

- 12 – 18 year-olds who have had at least one dose of the vaccine more than 14 days ago
- Anyone aged between 4 – 18 who has tested positive for COVID-19 themselves via a PCR test within the past 90 days and has completed their isolation
- Those who are medically exempt from vaccination as determined by their clinician

Any parents or carers who still want their child to continue to attend school have the right to send their child into the setting. In these situations, the child or young person should produce a negative PCR test and continue to undertake a daily Lateral Flow Test for four days and attend school only if negative.

Anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19, or feels unwell, should continue to get a PCR test and stay at home. Individuals informed by Test & Trace to isolate should remain at home for the time advised.

Suffolk is supporting education settings and has developed an enhanced local version of the Contingency Framework. It provides a range of step-up and step-down measures that settings can consider implementing depending on the assessed severity of the COVID-19 situation.

These additional control measures will be in place from 6 October 2021 and will be reviewed in the week starting 18 October 2021.

Simple actions reduce transmission. Washing hands regularly, maintaining a safe distance from others, meeting outside, wearing face coverings when needed and staying at home when feeling unwell are all actions we should continue to take as we continue to live with COVID-19.

We thank you for your continued support in helping to keep the people of Suffolk safe and well as we all learn to live with COVID-19.

Yours Sincerely



Stuart Keeble
Director of Public Health



Allan Cadzow
Director for Children and Young People's
Services