

Ask for: David Kilgallon
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Ref: DK/GK/KR
Date: 26 August 2021

Dear colleague

Return to school in September

I thought I would email you with a week or so to go before the start of term to provide an update on the proposed Waltham Forest management of the return of pupils and staff to schools and associated resources to support this.

Department for Education Guidance

I refer you to the “Schools COVID-19 operational guidance” as updated on 17 August 2021. It is very clear in communicating the imperative that we should “reduce the disruption to children and young people’s education” and therefore make school as normal as possible whilst maximising pupil attendance.

Risk Assessments

I attach again for ease of reference template risk assessment forms, one for Primary, the other Secondary. These were circulated earlier this week. Maintained schools should use the appropriate form to complete a school specific risk assessment for the start of term.

You are now very well versed on Covid management, so there is no requirement for you to submit for sign off. If maintained schools would like us to review their draft risk assessment please email these to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team (healthandsafety@walthamforest.gov.uk).

Academies are free to use this risk assessment if it is helpful. You will also need to check with your competent person about whether or not they wish to sign off any completed risk assessment.

Letter to parents/carers in the build up to the start of term

I attach a letter that we would ask schools to send to all parents/carers either directly before or at the start of term. This sets the context for how we will be working with you to safely manage the return to schools in the Autumn term.

Management of confirmed Covid cases in schools come September

We are advising schools to keep in place systems for parents to report all positive cases of COVID-19 to them. We are also requesting that schools continue to report all cases to the Local Authority Single Point of Contact email address, public.health@walthamforest.gov.uk using the updated reporting form that will be circulated at the start of next week and available on the Hub. This will allow us to continue to monitor the local situation and support schools, particularly while case numbers in Waltham Forest remain high.

While there is no longer a requirement for close contacts who are fully vaccinated or under the age of 18 years and 6 months to self-isolate, our advice to schools is that they continue to identify close contacts of any positive cases in the school and send parents/carers a warn and inform letter. This will enable them to take actions to reduce the risk of them passing the virus on to others, especially those that are vulnerable. A template letter from Public Health is attached for you to use.

This position will be reviewed at the end of September, to ensure it is still appropriate given local case rates and the experience of schools in the first few weeks of term.

Vaccinations

Covid vaccinations for students aged 16-17 will be rolled out from September, with 12–15 year olds under review and a likely near future priority. It is important for young people to be vaccinated to protect themselves, students, families, and school staff from transmission and illness, to maximise school attendance and to help minimise Covid related pupil/school teaching and learning disruption.

The Community vaccine programme is able to support schools to encourage students 16-17 yrs, and engage with 12–15 year olds re: vaccine education and take up. This offer consists of:

- Research: supporting schools to help NHS and Local Authority colleagues understand the current appetite for vaccine amongst younger people, for example using Survey Monkey.
- Communications and Engagement support: keeping the vaccine conversation alive to ensure informed and timely decisions can be made.
- Pop-Up Clinics: we are able to offer vaccine pop-up clinics in schools, by agreement, between September–November 2021.

Access of test kits

Schools are reminded that they can access home test kits via any of the following options;

1. By placing an order through the DfE re-order platform <https://request-testing.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/>
2. On site at the school
3. One of the Borough's four Asymptomatic Test Sites (ATS); or
4. One of the Borough's community collect locations.

The details for all of the above locations can be found by clicking [this link](#).

Parents / carers are also able to order an LFT Home Test Kit from the Government Website or by clicking [this link](#).

The Council [website](#) has a huge amount of helpful information regarding support that is available to parents/carers.

Thanks as always for your ongoing support.

Yours faithfully



David Kilgallon
Director of Learning and Systems Leadership