

Public Health Service

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17th March 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are writing to update you on the latest position in relation to Covid-19 in the borough. Although overall case numbers are in decline, locally we are still seeing increases in some areas. Therefore, it's important that we continue to be cautious and follow National Public Health Advice.

As you may know, the government announced on 22nd February that people who test positive for Covid-19 and their contacts are no longer legally required to isolate. The Government has set out the 'Living with Covid' plan, which emphasises the importance of following simple public health measures to minimise the chance of catching Covid-19 and help protect family and friends. We would appreciate your support in following these measures and hope that by doing so we will be able keep case rates low in the borough and ensure there is no further disruption to education.

Self-Isolation

Although self-isolation is no longer mandatory, individuals who test positive for covid-19 are advised to stay at home and not attend work or education. Until 31st March, if someone has tested positive for Covid-19 they should stay at home for 10 days, but can come out of isolation early on day 6 following 2 consecutive negative tests on Day 5 and 6.

If your child has tested positive for Covid-19, the school will advise that they do not attend for at least 5 days (they will be able to return to school early following 2 consecutive negative tests on days 5 and 6). In the latest Schools Covid-19 Operational Guidance (available at www.gov.uk), the Department for Education has advised that schools can take the decision to refuse a pupil if they feel it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with Covid-19.

If your child is displaying any of the three main symptoms of Covid-19 (cough, temperature, loss of taste or smell), their school may ask you to collect them and advise that they get a PCR test (until 31st March).

Locally, we are continuing to encourage schools to report positive cases of Covid-19 to us. This is so we can continue to monitor case rates in the borough and support schools effectively to manage the spread of infection; or where an outbreak occurs. We would appreciate your support with this.

Testing

Routine Lateral Flow Devices (LFD) Testing:

- From the 21 February 2022, staff and pupils in mainstream schools and early years are no longer expected to continue taking part in regular asymptomatic testing and should follow asymptomatic testing advice for the general population.
- In SEND and AP settings, staff, students and pupils should continue to test via LFDs twice a week (this includes SEND units in mainstream settings and equivalent identifiable cohorts in FE colleges).
- Until 31st March, the general public will still be able to access free LFD tests at local FAST sites, online and from local community collect venues. For more information, see <http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/coronavirus/Pages/test-and-trace.aspx>

Testing for people with symptoms of Covid-19:

Until 31st March, people who develop any of the three main symptoms of Covid-19 (cough, loss of taste/smell, high temperature) can still access free PCR tests through local testing centre or home tests. For more information, see: <http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/coronavirus/Pages/test-and-trace.aspx#centres>

Face Coverings

Although face coverings are no longer required in educational settings, some individuals may wish to continue wearing them. We would still encourage the use of face masks as a preventative public health measure, particularly in crowded and/or enclosed areas. In the event of an outbreak, schools will be advised to reinstate the use of face coverings, alongside other outbreak control measures.

What to do if you or your child tests positive for Covid-19

Follow the NHS guidance on what to do if you have coronavirus: ([When to stay at home if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and what to do - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/when-to-stay-at-home-if-you-have-coronavirus-covid-19-and-what-to-do))

Do:

- Stay at home if you can – this helps reduce the number of people you have contact with
- Ask friends, family, neighbours or volunteers to get food and other essentials for you

- Follow advice on how to avoid spreading COVID-19 to people you live with
- Cancel any routine medical or dental appointments – if you're worried about your health or asked to attend in person, let your medical contact (such as your GP or dentist) know about your symptoms or test result

Don't:

- Do not go to work, school or public places – if you're unable to work from home, ask your employer about options available to you
- Do not have visitors in your home, including friends and family – except for people providing essential care or services

Vaccinations:

- Clinically vulnerable 5 – 11 year olds or healthy 5 – 11 year olds that live with an immunocompromised relative can now book an appointment at one of the hospital hubs within the Northern Care Alliance.
- Clinics Available are:
 - Thursday 24 March 15:00 – 19:00 at Royal Oldham Hospital Hub, please ring 0161 627 8102 to book an appointment.
 - Thursday 31 March 15:00 – 19:00 at Rochdale Infirmary Hub, please ring 01706517874 to book an appointment.
- **All other 5 – 11 year olds will be invited to book an appointment through the National Booking System from the 4 April.**

Further Information and Support

Further information is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-COVID-19/>

For information on local services and support, visit <http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Yours Sincerely,

Covid-19 Duty Desk

Public Health & Wellbeing