



To All Headteachers

Children, Young People and Education

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Date: 20th January 2021

Dear Colleague

It is good to see that infection rates are reducing in every district in Kent. Whilst high rates remain in Dartford and Gravesham these have dropped significantly in the last seven days, resulting in the County average now being similar to that of England.

We have not collected attendance data this week as we can now access this from your returns to the DfE. This is showing that attendance levels have reduced a little, having been 23,000 last Monday. In part this may be because not all schools are completing the DfE return, resulting in fluctuations on different days.

School Type	Total Attending	% Total Attending
Primary	17822	17.8
Secondary	2648	2.9
Special	1293	29.7
PRU	89	41.8
Kent Total	21,852	11.2

Census Guidance

The census guidance has been updated to include 'unusual circumstances', see below:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/census-dates#unusual-circumstances--coronavirus-covid-19>

As schools are only open for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers, the majority of pupils will not be in attendance in schools on census day. Therefore, schools should record benefits related Free School Meals taken and Universal Infant FSM taken as reflecting what would have been the normal situation, for example, if a pupil would normally have a school meal on a Thursday they should be recorded as taking one on the census.

We recognise that the wording of the census guidance could lead to a level of uncertainty about whether schools should report UIFSM as the normal situation or just benefits related FSM; we support schools recording both FSM and UIFSM in this way.

Vaccinations in schools

I am aware that some schools have been contacted by the immunisation team wishing to arrange to continue with the planned vaccinations (HPV, Flu jabs etc). Schools have questioned whether they should be inviting pupils in specifically for this purpose. I have corresponded with colleagues in Public Health, and I summarise the response:

- The NHSE policy is to continue as normal in all screening and immunisations.
- The immunisation service has been advised to immunise in schools where they can and where there are pupils, otherwise to invite children and young people to community clinics. Schools should not be pressured in to inviting children back in during this period.
- PH are well aware that pursuing flu and HPV etc now may not be a very effective or efficient model and that staff might be better redeployed e.g. to help with COVID-19 vaccinations.

Therefore, the decision, as usual, falls to yourselves as school leaders to decide whether continue with these requests.

COVID-19 asymptomatic testing for staff in schools and nurseries

Primary - Yesterday the guidance for testing staff in primary schools was [published](#):

Primary, school-based nursery and maintained nursery staff will be supplied with lateral flow device (LFD) test kits to self-swab. These should have started to arrive from yesterday. Staff will be asked to take their test kits home and carry out the test twice a week. Testing is not mandatory, although participation is strongly encouraged.

An updated Flowchart from PHE can be found below:



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oolsFlowchartsV01.0

Secondary and Special

On Friday we advised schools with secondary aged pupils to pause serial testing for close contacts of confirmed cases and for close contacts to self-isolate.

Today the DfE announced that the programme of serial testing would be paused nationally. Close contacts of confirmed cases should self-isolate for 10 days from the date of last contact with the positive individual.

Regular testing of staff should continue and will increase to twice weekly as further reassurance and to break chains of transmission during this period.

An updated Flowchart from PHE can be found below:



PHESESecondarySc
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All Schools

The County Council now has 19 community asymptomatic test centres open. These operate 9am to 7pm, seven days a week. Further centres are being opened so that by the middle of next week there will be two in every district. Your staff are able to book appointments at these centres to have their twice weekly tests. Please see the [website](#).

We are currently talking with colleagues about how these centres can support schools in the testing of pupils before they return to school. You will be aware that the current intention is that pupils have two tests, a minimum of three days apart, before returning. We will provide more information about this soon.

All positive Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs) should be followed by a confirmatory PCR test. Close contacts outside the case's household, such as within school, are currently only required to isolate on receipt of a confirmed PCR test.

Since LFT testing rolled out to secondary and special schools at the beginning of term we understand school leaders have often considered it appropriate to advise close contacts within the school to begin self-isolation based on a positive LFT result pending the result of the PCR test. We support school leaders continuing to make decisions regarding positive LFT results that are appropriate for their context, including where this includes informing close contacts pending a PCR test; if the PCR is returned negative then self-isolation can end.

Individuals who have had covid-19 in the last 90 days, as confirmed by a positive PCR test at the time, should not undertake asymptomatic testing. This is because fragments of inactive virus can be persistently detected by the swab test in the respiratory tract for some time following infection.

An updated Resource Pack from PHE can be found below:



COVID19ResourcePackForEducationalS

Digital support for home learning

As you are aware the DfE are providing a further 300,000 devices to schools. However, we remain concerned that the lack of access to devices and the internet continues to hinder the learning opportunities of some pupils. In order to target any additional resources we may be able to access, and to robustly lobby for more, we will need data to evidence our concerns. I would be grateful if you could complete the very short form on the link below:

[Survey](#)

Thank you for your time in completing this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Adams'.

David Adams
Interim Director of Education