

NMc/HM

30/11/21

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Dear Parent/Carer

As Christmas approaches I wanted to provide you with an update on the mitigations that remain in place in our schools to keep our staff, children and young people safe from COVID-19.

As you will be aware, case numbers in East Lothian continue to rise. The impacts of self-isolation are being felt across our schools including staff and support staff, cleaners and home to school transport. Against this backdrop it is essential that we all continue to do all that we can to limit the spread of COVID-19 and the potential disruption to learning.

The Scottish Government published updated guidance on 21 November.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools/>

The guidance continues to emphasise the need for a range of measures to keep schools safe including:

- Restrictions on assemblies and gatherings
- Requirement to wear face coverings in secondary school classrooms
- The need for adults to physically distance from pupils and each other in secondary schools
- An emphasis on good ventilation, including an appropriate supply of fresh air to assist with minimising the risk of virus infection

Christmas performances, nativities and trips

Due to the restrictions that remain in place around our schools particularly around gatherings and groups we will be unable to hold in-person performances, dances, nativity plays, or trips to external events such as the pantomime. We realise that this may be disappointing to our children and young people but rest assured our schools will do all they can to make the season special for learners. Many of our schools have already been recording their Christmas performances ready to share with their families.

Ventilation in classrooms

Having adequate ventilation in our classrooms remains an important measure. Staff will balance this with the need to ensure that the class remains at a suitable temperature for learning however all parents are asked to ensure that children and young people attend school with adequate layers of clothing to keep warm. Many of our schools hold stores of pre-loved uniform if needed.

Home to school transport

Following reports that some children and young people have been removing face coverings during travel we again remind all families that coverings must be worn at all times during travel hand sanitiser should be used. This ensures the safety of all passengers and drivers and will avoid potential disruption to our home to school transport services. Further information is being shared with families who use this provision.

Vaccination programme

Latest information about the NHS Lothian vaccination programme including details for those under 18 and the location of clinics can be found here

<https://www.nhsllothian.scot/Coronavirus/Vaccine>

Remote learning

We are all doing all we can to keep our schools open however there may be times when there is a need to move to remote learning. Schools have contingency plans in place if this is the case and will inform their parents and carers at the earliest opportunity.

Reporting cases

If your child or young person is showing signs of COVID-19 please do not send them to school. Inform the school office of their absence in the usual way then self-isolate following guidance from NHS and Test and Protect. Please also inform covidinschools@eastlothian.gov.uk or call 01875 613921.

It continues to be a challenging time for our schools and staff, and I recognise this is also true for our families. However we are all grateful for your continued support to keep our children and young people safe and learning in school.

Yours sincerely



Nicola McDowell
Head of Education