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8th October 2021

Additional COVID-19 control measure agreed for schools in Cumbria

Dear Parents and Carers

I wrote to you on the 23rd September about additional COVID-19 control measures agreed for schools in Cumbria. These have been reviewed and updated as follows.

Children and young people who are household contacts of people who have tested positive

1. Children aged 4 and under

Parents of children aged 4 and under are advised to stay at home for five days if anyone in their household tests positive for COVID-19 (via either a PCR or Lateral Flow test). This should start from the onset of symptoms in the household contact who has tested positive (or test date if the positive case had no symptoms). The child should only have a PCR test if they develop symptoms of COVID-19.

2. Children and young people between the ages of 5 and 18+6 months

Children and young people between the ages of 5 and 18+6 months (unless exempt – see below), are advised to stay at home if anyone in their household tests positive for COVID-19 (via either a PCR or Lateral Flow test).

Five days following the onset of symptoms in the household contact who has tested positive (or test date if the positive case had no symptoms), the close contact young person should get a PCR test. If this is negative, they can return to the school, but should isolate again immediately and get another test if they develop symptoms of COVID-19 later.

Children and young people in this situation can be released from this self-isolation guidance and can continue to attend the setting while they are waiting for their PCR result **if** they conduct daily Lateral Flow tests, and these remain negative. If they develop symptoms of COVID-19, or receive a positive Lateral Flow test result, they should immediately isolate and get a PCR test. This approach is likely to be the norm for secondary school pupils, but it is also an option for primary school pupils if the parents/carers and school are in agreement.

The groups exempt from this advice are:

- Any child or young person who has had at least one dose of the vaccine more than 14 days ago.
- Any child or young person who has tested positive for COVID-19 themselves via a PCR test within the past 90 days.
- Where there are significant concerns about the impact of exclusion on the child or young person, and a risk assessment indicates that the risks of exclusion to the individual child outweigh the wider benefits.

Why are we advising this now?

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In the week ending 1st October 2021, the 12-18 age group accounted for the greatest number of new cases in Cumbria followed by the 5-11 age group (+774 and +427 new cases respectively).

The 12-18 and 5-11 age groups also accounted for by far the greatest rates of new cases in Cumbria (2,113 and 1,146 new cases per 100k population respectively).

However, new cases decreased slightly from the previous week in the 12-18 and 5-11 age groups (-2% and -11% respectively).

While this slight reduction in cases is encouraging, case rates remain high and managing COVID-19 continues to be a challenge for educational settings in Cumbria.

Additional advice

Any parents or carers who still want their child to continue to attend school have the right to do so. In these situations, we strongly advise the child or young person identified as a household contact to get a PCR test before attending school.

Anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 should get a PCR test and stay at home until the result is known. Individuals informed by Test & Trace to isolate should stay at home for the time advised.

These additional control measures will continue to be reviewed every 2 weeks and I will write to parents and carers again when we are able to remove them.

Thank you for your support.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Cox', with a horizontal line underneath.

Colin Cox
Director of Public Health
Cumbria County Council

