



Northumberland

County Council

Dear Parents and Carers,

Additional COVID-19 control measures in schools

There has been a large increase in the number of children and young people in Northumberland testing positive for COVID-19 and the highest case rates are in school age children. This is leading to spread of COVID-19 within families and into older age groups.

Northumberland has the highest uptake of vaccination in adults in England and we know that the vaccine is helping to prevent serious illness and deaths. However, the vaccine does not always stop people from becoming infected or spreading COVID-19 and we know that those with underlying conditions are more vulnerable.

The increase in COVID-19 in children is disrupting their education, affecting schools and has an impact on the wider community. Although children and adults who develop COVID-19 often have mild illness, many adults may be absent from work because COVID has spread within their household, or they need to care for children who have tested positive.

Our priority is to avoid any further disruption to face to face education. We now need to take further action to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in schools and the wider community across Northumberland

We have advised schools to implement the following measures as soon as possible -

1. Testing for household contacts of COVID-19

All close contacts of a case of COVID-19 should arrange a PCR test. School staff and secondary school age pupils who are household contacts of a positive case and continue to attend school because they are exempt from isolation are encouraged to undertake daily lateral flow testing until they receive a negative PCR test.

Note: People who have tested positive with a PCR test within the last 90 days should not be encouraged to test unless they develop new symptoms

2. Face coverings

We recommend that adults and secondary school age pupils wear face coverings in communal areas

3. Reduce mixing

Reduce mixing as far as possible to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19

4. Schools will carefully consider whether large events should continue.

This may include suspending whole-school or year group events and holding events such as parents' evenings and open days online.

5. Schools will carefully consider whether educational trips and residential visits should go ahead

6. Schools will continue to pay careful attention to ventilation, cleaning and hand hygiene

The Public Health and Education teams work closely together, monitoring COVID-19 cases and the impact on schools and will review these recommendations at regular intervals.

We appreciate that this continues to be challenging time for parents. We are grateful for your continued support for schools and in helping to keep your family and community safe.

Yours sincerely

Audrey Kingham

Liz Morgan

Director of Education and Skills

**Interim Executive Director Public Health and
Community Services**

10 November 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

Northumberland County Council Request for Schools to Introduce Tighter Restrictions

In line with the above letter to parents, we will be introducing some additional restrictions at both Bothal and Central Primary Schools. Please be reassured however, that cases of Covid-19 at both our primary schools remain low.

I appreciate that tighter restrictions may seem somewhat unnecessary when they are not reflected in wider society; however, we consider that schools have an important role to play in helping to manage the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. We have a duty of care to provide the best possible education for our pupils while protecting our staff, supporting the NHS and importantly, helping to curb the need for tighter national restrictions during the winter months.

Most restrictions outlined above are already in place and have been since we returned to school; however, we will be introducing the following measures (some of which you are already aware of):

- All staff wearing masks in communal areas.
- No lining up on the yards in the morning (we will continue to review pupil collection in the coming weeks, but the mornings seem to be working well).
- Some changes to the KS2 timetable to minimise the number of staff children have contact with.
- Suspending trips, including swimming, for a short period of time (a text message will follow with details - we hope to continue swimming when local rates are more settled).

After school clubs will still go ahead but will be reviewed if we have an increase in cases. Wraparound and breakfast club will continue and have their own risk assessment in place.

This also means that many of our Christmas events will be a little different (but no less special) this year. I will send a Christmas letter shortly detailing our plans. Christmas is a magical time for children, and we will ensure that they still have all the lovely experiences we remember from school, however we will just have to be somewhat creative in making them happen!

Yours sincerely

L Hall

Miss L Hall
Executive Headteacher