

Dear Parent/Carer,

From September 2020, the government has committed to the further re-opening of schools for all pupils. Sefton Council has been working closely with our education sector colleagues to support them to create safer environments for reopening.

This is a really important step for our community, and particularly for our children and young people. Reopening will enable them to socialise and continue their learning, whilst bringing wider benefits for families, parents and carers.

The government guidance is very clear in the expectation of all children returning to school in September. Attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term with the exception of a small number of students who remain under the care of a specialist health professional and are unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical or public health advice.

We understand that this is still a worrying time. Recognising this, we wanted to provide some information about the infection control and prevention measures being used. These measures are based on the comprehensive risk assessments that each educational setting has undertaken. Schools in Sefton have opened during the pandemic to provide support for vulnerable children and children of key workers, so these measures have already been in place for a period of time. They include:

- The requirement that people who have symptoms of COVID-19 or live with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 stay at home and do not attend the educational setting
- Actions to reduce contact and maximise distancing between those in school. These measures may be varied between settings, but could include the staggering of start and finish times or changes to the layout of school classrooms to help maintain social distancing
- Other actions such as implementing good ventilation in classrooms by opening windows and doors, or holding PE lessons outdoors when possible
- The provision of enhanced cleaning including the regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces using standard products
- Actions to encourage good hand and respiratory hygiene, including regular handwashing or hand sanitising throughout the school day
- The use of relevant guidance and procedures if someone has COVID-19 symptoms on the premises or if someone has tested positive after attending the school setting. This would include engagement with NHS Test and Trace, Public Health England, local authority public health teams and the local health protection team.

Your child's school will be in direct contact with you to make sure you are aware of specific arrangements.

- We also ask and encourage all staff, pupils and parents to do the following to reduce risk within our schools:
- Wash hands regularly with soap and warm water or hand sanitiser
- Maintain two metre social distancing where possible
- Carry a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes (and then putting the tissue in the bin)

- Wear a face covering on public transport and when inside public places
- Stay at home, follow national guidance on self-isolation and arrange a free test via www.nhs.uk or by calling 119, if you do display symptoms (high temperature, new and persistent cough, loss or change in sense of taste or smell). You should remain at home until the test result comes back. If the result is positive you should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days.
- Keep up to date with all of your vaccinations and take part in the flu vaccination programme (please see attached Flu Vaccination 2020 to 2021 Programme Briefing for Schools).
- Walk or Cycle to school if you can.

I would like to thank everyone for their hard work and commitment during these difficult times. I look forward to working together to ensure staff and pupils return to school safely.

Yours Sincerely,

Margaret Jones
Director of Public Health

Tricia Davies
Interim Head of Education