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Dear Colleagues

September Return: COVID-19 Contingency Framework for Schools

Welcome back, I trust that you were able to have some time relaxing over the summer and are looking forward to what no doubt will be a challenging and enjoyable term. On 17th August the Government published its updated guidance for schools on the baseline control measures all schools should have in place for the [Autumn](#) term and alongside this its advice on [contingency planning](#) in schools. The purpose of this letter is to signpost you to guidance and the arrangements for seeking further advice should additional measures be required in your school. We have updated the risk assessment, flow chart and COVID-19 case notification form.

Over August the infection rate across London and in Ealing has remained relatively high, around 300 per 100,000, and it is expected that this will rise during the Autumn. Schools already have business continuity/emergency management plans and it is expected that these or the schools Covid-19 risk assessment will include contingency plans to cover how individual schools would operate if any of the measures within the [contingency framework](#) are temporarily recommended.

The contingency framework includes measures that schools should consider putting in place where one of the following thresholds are met:

- 5 or 10 percent (whichever is lower) of pupils, students or staff who have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period; or
- 2 children, students or staff in special schools that have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period; or
- A pupil, student or staff member is admitted to hospital with COVID-19.

The annex to the framework gives examples of close mixing such as in classes, friendship groups and sports teams.

You know your school community best. For the first two thresholds, you may decide what additional arrangements to put in place. For example, reviewing the implementation of base line measures, restricting whole school assemblies and other events, taking further steps to encourage asymptomatic testing in high schools or the temporary reintroduction of face coverings. Other options are set out in the flow chart for schools, attached.

At the stage any thresholds are met, if you need any further advice, in the first instance, please contact the DfE helpline (0800 046 8687, Option 1). Should infections continue to increase above the thresholds, contact Ealing's Public Health

Team, through Raj Chowdhury or Stephen Dunham so we can jointly review any additional measures with you. Any significant additional measures, such as closing a class or a year group, for example, would be a last resort, with the decision taken following discussions between the school and Public Health Ealing/LCRC.

Children have a very low risk of becoming seriously ill from catching COVID and you will know of the harm that being out of school has on children's learning and well-being. All additional measures are to be proportionate to the risk and benefit.

For this half term we would ask for you continue to notify us of individual cases so we can monitor patterns and assist us in targeting support that may be required. A revised copy of the notification form is attached. The form also has space for you to tell us about any additional measures that you have put in place once a case reaches any of the DfE thresholds.

Close Contacts for young children

Although the identification of close contacts is the role of NHS T&T, primary school children, particularly younger ones, may struggle to identify close contacts themselves. Therefore, in order to keep the school community as safe as possible, we are recommending in situations where a positive COVID case might struggle to identify close contacts, a warn and inform letter (attached) is sent to close contacts identified by the school, advising them to undergo a PCR test as per national guidance.

COVID-19 Vaccinations for children aged 12-15 and young people aged 16 years and over with additional needs

The joint committee on vaccinations and immunisations recommended that children aged 12 to 15 years with particular underlying conditions could be vaccinated with the Pfizer vaccine. This includes children aged 12 to 15 with severe Neurodisability's, Down's syndrome, multiple or severe learning disabilities and those who are on the GP learning disability register. We are also able to offer vaccinations to young people aged 16 and over who meet this criteria.

Please can you encourage vaccine take up with further information on making bookings available on [EGfL](#).

COVID-19 Vaccinations for all students aged 16 and over

All 16 and 17 year olds are now entitled to a Pfizer vaccination. Take up has been encouraging and we would ask that you encourage those who have not had a vaccination to take up this offer. Parental consent is not required for this group. Students do not need to be registered with a GP.

Information on vaccination sites across North West London can be found through the following link. <https://www.nwlondonccg.nhs.uk/coronavirus/vaccine-centres>

All these appointments are walk-in, first come first served basis.

There are a wide range of resources on-line to support staff dealing with questions about the vaccine. Some of the common FAQs are available on the Council's web-site https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201262/coronavirus_covid-19/2765/coronavirus_covid-19_vaccines

DfE webinar on preparing for autumn term for all education settings

The DfE has recorded a webinar providing an update on testing, latest contingency planning, and COVID-19 management advice. The webinar can be found on the [document sharing platform](#) titled 'Ref RP158 preparing for autumn term' and schools are encouraged to view.

We look forward to working with schools during the new academic year as we move to a new phase in the government's response to the pandemic, moving away from stringent restrictions on everyone's day-to-day lives.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely



Gary Redhead
Assistant Director Children's Services