

May 2021



Dear Parents and Carers,

We'd like to thank you for keeping to the national and local guidance – social distancing, frequently washing hands and using face coverings. Here in Leicester we've been under lockdown more than anywhere else in the country, so we know just how important these actions are.

COVID-19 case rates in Leicester are at around 37 per 100,000 of the population, the lowest the rate has been since last autumn. Our rates are coming down; however they continue to be significantly higher than the national average and in the last couple of weeks we have seen our rates fall at a slower pace. We urge you to remain vigilant even as restrictions continue to be relaxed and from Monday, 17 May, as you begin to mix more with your families and friends.

You may have heard about different variants of the virus. In Leicester, all positive PCR test results are checked to see if they are a variant. We have systems to make sure we are informed of potential variant cases very quickly and that we respond rapidly to such cases. This means that we can contain any spread to a very small number of people. We will continue to do this in the coming months. Please be assured that there is nothing additional for you to do about variant cases unless specifically contacted by ourselves or Public Health England.

The best way to reduce the transmission of ALL cases, not just variant cases remains: social distancing, frequent hand washing, wearing face coverings when required, keeping the number of people you are in contact with as low as possible and getting tested regularly as part of the lateral flow testing or when symptomatic. In other words, continuing to do the things you have been doing:

- Not sending your child to school if they have any symptoms
- Arranging a test if any member of your household has symptoms and isolating all contacts until the results of the test are known
- Keeping your child at home if they have been identified as a contact with a confirmed case
- Continuing to do twice weekly lateral flow tests and confirmatory PCR tests if any results are positive

We would also urge everyone who is eligible to have their vaccination when invited to do so. Vaccination, alongside the measures above, are the best ways to reduce the spread of coronavirus and protect both ourselves and our loved ones. Other than in a very few cases, the tiny risks associated with vaccination are far lower than the very real risks from infection.

Schools and settings continue to have arrangements so that children are able to attend school so please do keep sending your child to school throughout the rest of the summer term unless they are unwell, have had a positive test or advised to self-isolate. As usual schools will only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.

From Monday, 17 May, there are some changes to some of the rules for schools.

Guidance about face coverings has changed.

Following the government's announcement, from 17 May, pupils, staff, and visitors will no longer be required to wear face coverings in school during lessons. However, they may still wear them if they want to.

In Leicester we are still encouraging secondary aged pupils to wear face coverings in indoor communal areas, such as corridors, where it is difficult to maintain social distancing.

Staff and visitors in all schools must continue to wear a mask in indoor communal areas at all times.

Visit leicester.gov.uk/facecoverings for the most up to date guidance for Leicester.

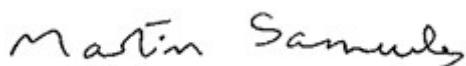
There is no national or local recommendation that children in primary schools wear a face covering.

Trips and visits

School organised trips are now allowed in the government rules. If your child's school organises a trip or visit, they will make sure that all the safety measures are in place. They will not be mixing groups of children.

For further help and advice around Coronavirus, please visit the council's website - leicester.gov.uk/coronavirus and remember as things start to reopen we need to take this step carefully. Keep a distance from others, wear face coverings and wash hands often. Get tested regularly.

Kind regards,



Martin Samuels
Strategic Director, Social Care and
Education



Ivan Browne
Director of Public Health and Sports
Services