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**Sent:** 21 January 2021 13:08

**To:** Janet Perry <[janet.perry@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:janet.perry@tameside.gov.uk)>

**Subject:** 21 January – Coronavirus – Daily update to all early years, children’s social care, schools and further education providers

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of Tameside Council. This email claims to contain information about Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Please inspect the email carefully to verify this is not a phishing email before clicking any links or opening attachments. Please exercise caution. Do you trust the person? Does the email look genuine? Were you expecting the attachment?

This message is just a reminder to remain vigilant. If in any doubt, please contact the IT Service Desk or Cyber Security Officer.



This is your daily email to keep you updated on the government’s response to coronavirus (COVID-19). If you have colleagues who would like to receive this email directly, please ask them to use this [subscription form](#).

## Supporting schools with the impacts of flooding

We are aware that Storm Christoph is having a significant impact across some areas of the UK. As part of our national monitoring, we are gathering information on schools that have closed or may have to close, specifically as a result of flooding impacts. This allows us to identify which schools may need our support and also to co-ordinate a national picture.

Schools should indicate in their attendance return if they have had to close as a result of flooding. We will be using the data to assess if there are any property or facilities damages and to understand if there are any potential impacts on provision for

vulnerable children and the children of critical workers across the regions.

## **Attendance of vulnerable children and children of critical workers**

Limiting attendance at schools and colleges helps to support the reduction in the overall number of social contacts in our communities, which is a vital intervention in the context of current very high transmission rates. Schools should continue to encourage attendance of those vulnerable children and children of critical workers who need to be in school. We know this means that attendance levels vary from school to school, but aggregate school attendance is much lower than full attendance, at around only 5% in secondary schools and 20% in primary schools at present, and so we will see the desired reduction in social contacts.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health has [recently made clear](#) that the overwhelming majority of children and young people still have no symptoms, or very mild illness only. There is no evidence the new strain of the virus causes more serious illness in either children or adults. The [Schools Infection Survey](#) (covering 3 to 19 November) found the infection rate among teachers to be similar to that of the wider population. The way to control this virus is the same, whatever the variant.

Current evidence suggests that the Public Health England (PHE)-endorsed 'system of controls' that have been in use throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (which includes minimising contact with individuals who are unwell, use of face coverings in corridors and communal areas, cleaning hands and good respiratory hygiene, enhanced cleaning, minimising contact, use of PPE and ventilation in situations set out in guidance) are still the right measures to take. These measures create an inherently safer environment for children, young people and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is

substantially reduced. DfE keeps these controls under review, working with PHE, based on the latest evidence. Schools therefore need to continue to implement these controls to the fullest extent possible (as they did before national lockdown when schools were full), whilst providing on-site provision for all of their vulnerable children and children of critical workers who need to be in school.

## **Guidance for staff testing in primary schools, school-based nurseries and maintained nursery schools**

Primary schools (including school-based nurseries) should expect to receive a delivery of home testing kits either this week or in the first half of next week. If you have not received your delivery by Wednesday 27 January, please contact the DfE coronavirus (COVID-19) helpdesk on 0800 046 8687. Please also call the helpline, not the delivery companies, if you have any other enquiries about your delivery. We are planning to begin deliveries to maintained nursery schools from week commencing 1 February.

We have now published guidance for [testing primary, school-based nursery and maintained nursery school staff](#) to support you with this. Further information, guidance and resources to support rapid testing are now available on the [primary schools document sharing platform](#). Home testing of staff in primary schools (including school-based nurseries) can begin from week commencing Monday 25 January once schools have received and distributed kits to staff.

## **Update on the testing programme and daily contact testing**

Recent media coverage has suggested that the programme of mass testing of staff and pupils in secondary schools and colleges has paused, this is incorrect.

The main schools and colleges testing programme, using rapid lateral flow tests to find asymptomatic staff and pupils and those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) but do not have symptoms, is continuing. However, following [new advice from NHS Test and Trace and Public Health England \(PHE\)](#), we are temporarily pausing the daily contact testing element of the testing programme, which was in place as an alternative to self-isolation for those who came into contact with positive cases in schools. This will enable further evaluation to take place. Schools or colleges who have found daily contact testing helpful and would like to take part in the evaluation should contact the NHS Test and Trace evaluation team:

[dct-pilotpmo@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:dct-pilotpmo@dhsc.gov.uk)

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The information below has not changed since our last update

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## **Twice weekly testing for staff in secondary schools and colleges**

Rapid testing remains a vital part of our plan to suppress this virus. The use of rapid lateral flow tests is already proving beneficial in finding people with coronavirus (COVID-19) before they develop symptoms. We will therefore also be encouraging schools and colleges to increase regular testing of staff to twice weekly as further reassurance and to break chains of transmission during this period. Our guidance for secondary schools and colleges will be updated shortly.

## **Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline**

The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline and the PHE Advice Service (option 1) is available to answer any questions you have about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education settings and children's social care.

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours:

Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm

Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 6pm

Please listen carefully to all of the available options before selecting the most appropriate option for your nursery, school, college or university.

## **Look up your unique organisation number (UON)**

If you have not received your unique organisation number (UON) for ordering new coronavirus (COVID-19) test kits you can [look it up using your unique reference number \(URN\) or your UK provider reference number \(UKPRN\)](#) or by calling the Test and Trace helpdesk on 119.

## **Department for Education guidance**

Our guidance to support education providers, local authorities and parents during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak can be accessed using the links below:

- [Guidance for early years and childcare providers](#)

- [Guidance for schools](#)
- [Guidance for further and higher education providers](#)
- [Guidance for local authority children's services](#)