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12<sup>th</sup> October 2021

## **Additional COVID-19 control measures agreed for schools in Cumbria**

Dear Parents and Carers

I wrote to you on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September about additional COVID-19 control measures agreed for schools in Cumbria. These have been reviewed and updated below.

This guidance has been issued by Cumbria's public health team to tackle the spread of COVID-19 amongst young people in the county. It is not law, but guidance to help keep Cumbrian families safe. We strongly encourage you to follow this guidance as best as you can.

A "household contact" is someone who has been in contact with someone from their own household (for example, a sibling or parent) who has tested positive for COVID-19.

### **Children and young people who are household contacts of people who have tested positive**

#### **Children aged 4 and under**

- Children aged 4 and under who are household contacts of a positive case should be kept at home for 5 days, starting from the onset of symptoms in the household contact who has tested positive (or test date if the positive case had no symptoms).
- The child should only have a PCR test if they develop symptoms of COVID-19.

#### **Children and young people between the ages of 5 and 18+6 months**

- Young people aged between 5 - 18+6 months (unless exempt – see below), are advised to stay at home if anyone in their household tests positive for COVID-19 (via either a PCR or Lateral Flow test).
- Five days after symptoms began in the household contact who tested positive (or test date if the positive case had no symptoms), the young person should get a PCR test.
- If the PCR is negative, they can return to their school, but should isolate again immediately and get another test if they develop symptoms of COVID-19 later.

OR

- Instead of isolating for the five days, children and young people who are contacts of household positive cases can take a Lateral Flow Test each morning and if negative, attend school the same day (rather than staying at home). This is an option for both primary and secondary school children.
- If they develop symptoms of COVID-19, or receive a positive Lateral Flow test result, they should immediately isolate and get a PCR test.

The groups exempt from this advice (meaning they can attend school as normal) are:

- Any child or young person who has had at least one dose of the vaccine more than 14 days ago.
- Any child or young person who has tested positive for COVID-19 themselves via a PCR test within the past 90 days.
- Where there are significant concerns about the impact of exclusion on the child or young person, but they are unable to carry out daily lateral flow testing.

### **Why are we advising this now?**

In the week ending 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021, the 12-18 age group accounted for the greatest number of new cases in Cumbria followed by the 5-11 age group (+774 and +427 new cases respectively).

The 12-18 and 5-11 age groups also accounted for by far the greatest rates of new cases in Cumbria (2,113 and 1,146 new cases per 100k population respectively).

However, new cases decreased slightly from the previous week in the 12-18 and 5-11 age groups (-2% and -11% respectively).

While this slight reduction in cases is encouraging, case rates remain high and managing COVID-19 continues to be a challenge for educational settings in Cumbria.

### **Additional advice**

Any parents or carers who still want their child to continue to attend school have the right to do so. In these situations, we strongly advise the child or young person identified as a household contact to get a PCR test before attending school.

Anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 should get a PCR test and stay at home until the result is known. Individuals informed by Test & Trace to isolate should stay at home for the time advised.

These additional control measures will continue to be reviewed every 2 weeks and I will write to parents and carers again when we are able to remove them.

Thank you for your support.

Yours Sincerely,



Colin Cox  
Director of Public Health  
Cumbria County Council