

Dear Parent or Carer,

With Christmas fast approaching and concerns around Covid once again in the headlines, I wanted to let you know what the latest position is in North East Lincolnshire.

We have a high rate of covid infections currently, with about 1,000 people testing positive over the last week in the borough (the highest number we have seen in several months). The rates of infections in school age children and young people are particularly high and many schools are managing significant outbreaks. We do not have any cases of the new Omicron variant currently, but this could change quickly as cases of this variant are now spreading quickly in the southeast of England.

The public health team have therefore advised schools to be extra careful in deciding whether to go ahead with Christmas plays and events for families this year. All schools have been asked to see if they can reduce the risk of transmission of illness. This will be different in every school based on things like the size, layout, and buildings. If headteachers don't feel they can go ahead safely, and especially if they have high or increasing levels of Covid in their school community, events may need to be postponed or held in a different way. Some schools may need to change their plans at the last minute if their situation changes. We hope that as many events as possible can still go ahead, but only where they won't increase the risk of leaving people poorly over Christmas.

We have also suggested to schools that for the period between now and the Christmas holidays they may wish to ask parents to keep their children away from school if another person living in their household tests positive for COVID until the child has had a negative PCR test (which should be given 3-5 days after their household member started with symptoms). This measure will help to bring some of the current outbreaks under control and prevent further outbreaks over the next two weeks.

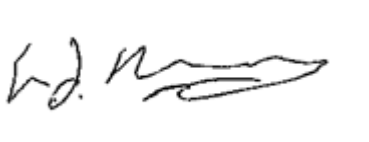
Please do continue to support your school community by:

- getting vaccinated if you aren't already
- staying at home and getting a PCR test if you have symptoms
- taking an LFT test before you socialise
- wearing a face covering/ mask wherever it's crowded

It is hard to get the balance right between keeping people safe from Covid and making sure our children can have the best school experience possible. I'm extremely proud of every one of our schools for navigating this so carefully every day.

Thank you very much for your support, and I wish you a healthy and happy Christmas.

Yours faithfully



Geoff Barnes  
Interim Director of Public Health