

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Head Teacher
Letter sent via email

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Date: 16 July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer, Student and School Staff

Thank You

You have all been amazing. The dedication, patience, resilience and leadership you have all shown in following the public health guidance through such tough circumstances and uncertain times since last March, is something myself and my team are extremely grateful for. I wanted to express my thanks and gratitude to you all for your hard work during this last 18 months.

The dedication of frontline staff, volunteers and local residents is captured in my latest Director of Public Health Annual Report 2020 short film, available via the following link

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/health-and-social-care/health-and-wellbeing/public-health.aspx>

I would like to update you on the proposed plans for the remainder of the school year following the announcement by the UK Government on the move to Step 4 of the government roadmap from the 19th July.

19th July onwards

All schools have been given the option by the government to continue operating with bubbles, social distancing and face coverings for the remainder of the summer term. Due to increasing infection rates in Cheshire West and Chester, Public Health have advised schools and school transport providers to continue with these arrangements.

Sadly, the pandemic isn't over, as we continue to see our rates rise, education, businesses and health services continue to be impacted by the virus. We know how important it is to get fully vaccinated. Please can I encourage everyone who is eligible and hasn't taken up the offer yet to



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attend one of our local drop-in vaccination sessions. Information on these sessions is available on all our social media sites.

As the Director of Public Health, I have also issued the following advice to anyone who lives, works, studies or visits Cheshire West and Chester.

- **Get fully vaccinated** – it's shown to be safe and effective against the virus, including new variants and is the best way to keep yourself from getting seriously ill. It also reduces the risk of passing the virus on to someone else
- **Be kind and considerate of** others who may be feeling extremely nervous about the further lifting of restrictions
- **Continue wearing face coverings** in crowded indoor areas where social distancing cannot be followed, such as supermarkets and on public transport, in health and social care settings, such as hospitals, care homes and GP surgeries, and where it would make others feel more comfortable
- **Continue social distancing** by not unnecessarily being in crowded areas and continuing to work from home if possible
- **Continue to practice good hand hygiene, in particular hand washing**
- **Keep getting tested** – everyone should undertake twice weekly rapid symptom free testing using Lateral Flow Tests (LFT). If people experience generally associated symptoms such as a headache, a stuffed or runny nose, tiredness or weakness, aches and pains, sore throat or diarrhoea, they should take an LFT and follow up with a PCR test if the LFT test is positive. If people have any of the main symptoms of COVID-19 such as a high temperature, a new continuous cough or loss or change to their sense of smell or taste they must stay at home and book a PCR test. Around one in three people with COVID-19 don't have symptoms but can still infect others - so getting tested regularly will help slow the spread.
- **Self-isolate** if you have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19, especially if you work in a high-risk setting

We will issue further guidance towards the end of August once we have a clear understanding of the impact the reduction on restrictions has had on local infection rates.

Changes in self-isolation rules from the 16th August 2021

I also welcome the government announcement that anyone under 18 or double vaccinated will no longer need to isolate if they are a contact of a confirmed case from the 16 August. We hope this approach will ensure that the disruption to students' education is now minimised.

For the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 please visit <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/>

I hope you all have a relaxing, enjoyable and safe summer.

Yours sincerely



Ian Ashworth
Director of Public Health



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