

# Cheshire West & Chester Council

Head Teacher  
Letter sent via email

Cheshire West and Chester Council  
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**Your reference:**

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**Date:** Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Head Teacher, Chair of Governors, Parent/Carer,

On the 2 July 2020 the Government committed to the re-opening of schools to all pupils. Since then Cheshire West and Chester Council have been working closely with partners including the Department for Education and Public Health England to ensure that schools feel supported to do this in a safe way. This work is building on the success of the expanded return of pupils in June and July where Early years, Reception, Year 1, 6, 10 and 12 pupils returned to re-start their education.

Our approach is informed by current scientific evidence which suggests that in the UK, only a small percentage of the cases of COVID-19 have occurred in children<sup>1</sup>. For those children who have had COVID-19 we know they are more likely to experience mild or no symptoms. Investigations have also found that where there are cases in schools', child to child spread of the virus is uncommon. To reduce the risk further we are committed to supporting schools to implement infection prevention and control measures based on the comprehensive risk assessments they have undertaken<sup>2</sup>. These measures include:

- Staggering start and finish times to help to maintain social distancing
- Changing the layout of school classrooms to help maintain social distancing
- Implementing good ventilation in classrooms by opening windows and doors
- Enhanced cleaning regimes
- Encouraging regular handwashing or hand sanitising throughout the school day

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<sup>1</sup> [COVID-19 in children and the role of school settings in COVID-19 transmission, 6 August 2020. Stockholm: ECDC; 2020.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Department for Education \(2020\) Guidance for full opening: schools](#)



- Class and year group bubbles
- Supporting pupils and staff who have symptoms or a positive test to self-isolate
- Training in how NHS Test and Trace operates

I also want to offer you assurance that robust systems have been put in place to manage any cases of COVID-19 in a school environment. This will include support from your Local Authority Public Health Team and the regional Public Health England team. We will also continue to offer Head Teachers further COVID-19 training exercises.

As a result of the evidence and the interventions our schools are introducing, I am extremely supportive of the approach to return staff and pupils to the school environment. It is essential that our children and young people can continue with their learning to enable them to achieve their full potential.

It is important that we all take responsibility for reducing the spread of the virus and other diseases. There are several things which I would like to encourage all staff, pupils and parents to include in their daily routine. These include:

- Regular hand washing with soap and warm water or hand sanitiser
- Maintaining two metre social distancing where possible
- Carrying a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes (and then putting the tissue in the bin)
- Wearing a face covering on public transport and when inside public places
- If you do display symptoms (high temperature, new and persistent cough, loss or change in sense of taste or smell), stay at home and arrange a free test through [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or by calling 119 and self-isolate until the result comes back. If the result is positive you should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days.
- Keeping up to date with all of your vaccinations and taking part in the flu vaccination programme (please see attached Flu Vaccination 2020 to 2021 Programme Briefing for Schools).
- Walk or Cycle to school if you can.

I would like to thank everyone for their hard work and commitment during these difficult times and I look forward to working with you to ensure staff and pupils return to school is successful.

Yours sincerely



**Ian Ashworth**  
**Director of Public Health**