

November 2021

Dear parent/carers,

We would like to thank you for the fantastic efforts you have been making to support the additional measures in schools during these challenging weeks and months. These further actions protect all in the school and are designed to ensure the system continues to run smoothly and allow all children to participate in education. By supporting these measures, you are really helping us to do all we can to protect children and ensure they are able to enjoy school safely.

As you will be aware, due to the high case rates in both Local Authority areas, Public Health Dorset, BCP Council and Dorset Council provided [additional guidance for educational settings](#) across the county to reduce transmission of COVID-19, with a review at the end of November.

This was a joint approach across the South West region which set out further measures schools could take within the [Department for Education's Contingency Framework](#), including enhanced testing requirements, face coverings in communal areas and limiting large gatherings and mixing between groups.

We have now reviewed these measures with local and regional partners and agree that these measures should be extended until the end of the school winter term on 17 December. Case rates remain highest amongst school aged children, particularly the 10-14 age group, and removing measures too early could lead to cases increasing rapidly again.

We support the continuation of these measures for the following reasons:

- Our local case rates remain significantly above the England average, and are now above the South West average
- Case rates are not coming down quickly, and the decrease is much slower than in other regions
- Across the county, case rates are over 1700 for 0 – 15 year olds

The overarching objective of the Department for Education's Contingency Framework is to maximise the number of children and young people in face-to face education or childcare and minimise any disruption, in a way that best manages the COVID-19 risk. For the above reasons, these measures support this objective.

We are asking schools to continue to risk assess their individual situations and implement any necessary measures within the framework provided.

Your school will be in contact regarding any changes affecting their setting.

A further review will take place at the end of December and we will provide more information to schools ahead of this.

Yours sincerely

Public Health Dorset