



Director of Public Health Office
Sheffield Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield, S1 2HH
Web Site: www.sheffield.gov.uk
To: All Schools and Early Years/Child Care Settings

Thursday 16th July 2020

Dear Head Teacher, School Staff and Early Years and Child Care Settings

Re: The end of the academic year 2019-20

I wanted to take the opportunity as the end of the academic year approaches to acknowledge just how challenging we all may have found recent months. I wanted to thank you for your constant hard work, support and commitment over recent months.

Across the city you have enabled children of key workers and vulnerable children to continue to attend settings and welcomed more children and young people back in line with changes to government guidance over recent months. On behalf of colleagues and partners across the NHS and health system I wanted to pass on their thanks for enabling the health system to function under what was unprecedented demand. Enabling NHS staff to have access to childcare and school settings at this time was crucial.

All settings have had to be flexible, adapt, interpret guidance and manage risk on a level most will not have experienced before. Thank you for this.

Over the months of July and August I hope that you are able to take some time out and have a break.

As a city there is still a long way to go and lots to consider. This involves us living and functioning with the COVID-19 virus for the foreseeable future. To do this we need to continue to reinforce and adhere to the key measures which limit the transmission of the virus and reduce risk. Alongside this, we have comprehensive data sets which we now, locally, are able to access and analyse, as well as having robust systems in place to manage any outbreaks and cases alongside Public Health England (PHE). As September approaches these will be extremely important systems and processes and I will write to you closer to the time to share an updated picture of the situation in Sheffield and steps and plans being taken. Of course our links and relationships with settings will continue to be vitally important in September and as we monitor the virus, the Public Health Team may need to work closely with you. Thank you for regularly completing the Situation Reports and for keeping in contact with us. The Public Health Team want to continue to help and support you as much as we can.

In the interim and over the summer I imagine many settings will continue to be thinking carefully about the autumn and wider opening. If settings have questions or wish to discuss plans with the Public Health Team please contact: PublicHealthC&YP@sheffield.gov.uk We will be available over the summer for support.

I have also drafted a letter for parents/carers and I would welcome if you could please distribute this over the next couple of days. The letter reinforces the important things that we continue to have to do. Any opportunity you have to reinforce these messages will be extremely helpful. I am also mindful of the school transport issue and concerns schools may have about how this will impact from September. We are currently considering this and my letter to parents/carers asks for careful consideration of how pupils travel to and from school at the start of the academic year.

Throughout the summer and particularly as we get closer to the start of the new academic year, our Public Health communications will focus on getting 'back to school safely'. This will

hopefully help to reinforce the considerations parents/carers will need to take to help our children and young people return to educational settings safely. We will keep you informed about key messages surrounding this campaign and, wherever possible, would ask for your assistance in emphasising our key messages; sharing important information with parents/carers.

As well as the 'back to school safely' messages the Covid-19 key messages that we must continue to emphasise over the summer are:

If you have symptoms, however mild you must

- Self-isolate and get a COVID-19 test immediately at [NHS.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or call 119
- If the test is positive – to protect others, you must follow advice provided by NHS test & trace, household contacts should isolate for 14 days.

The COVID-19 virus likes confined and crowded places and close contact – so you can reduce your risks by

- **Keeping a safer 2 meter distance from people** outside your household or bubble, wherever possible.
- **Regularly washing your hands** - for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap and hot water or using hand sanitiser
- **Wearing face coverings** on public transport, in shops and when you cannot socially distance or come into contact with people you do not normally meet. Some people are exempt from wearing face coverings such as young children, people with disabilities. You can download or print face covering exemption cards from Travel South Yorkshire or collect from Transport Interchanges <https://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/en-GB/LandingPage/Journey-Assistance-Cards> This may help you explain to people in official capacity why you are not wearing a face covering in mandatory settings.

I know that the above is everything, that as schools and settings, you have continually reinforced over recent months and I thank you for emphasising this key guidance.

Finally, it is important to not underestimate the strong links you have with local communities. The unique position you have and relationship with families is key to helping reduce the transmission of COVID-19. I'm aware that many settings have been regularly supporting parents/carers to access testing, helping when families have had to isolate and reassuring families when they are worried or concerned. With some settings closing over the summer break the Sheffield Community Helpline may be useful in providing a service to support families. The service can be contacted on 0114 2734567 and can help with arranging testing, providing information and helping individuals who may be isolating.

Thank you again for all that you have done and will continue to do for children, young people, families and the city of Sheffield. I really hope you get time to have a break over July and August and my team and I really look forward to working with you again in September.
Yours sincerely



Greg Fell
Director of Public Health