



Date: 30 November 2021

## **Open letter from Norfolk County Council's Director of Learning and Inclusion & Director of Public Health**

Dear Parents and Carers,

We felt it was important to write to you to thank you for working together to make sure the children and young people of Norfolk receive the best education in the safest way possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are delighted that a majority of Norfolk parents have consented for their child to be vaccinated. We are grateful to you and to our schools, which have hosted a key part of the vaccination programme for 12 to 15 year olds. We would urge all eligible adults and children to take up the offer of a vaccine and further strengthen our vaccine wall of defence against the virus.

We want to use this opportunity to outline the way COVID-19 outbreaks are managed in our schools.

### **Managing COVID-19 in education**

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness. Children and young people are at very low risk of serious illness if they catch the virus.

It remains our view that children should be at school and we recognise that COVID-19 will be with us for some time.

We still need to take measures to keep down the spread of COVID-19 in schools.

Your school may take different measures to neighbouring schools. This may be because of the particular building, staffing or specific advice they receive from our public health advisers. All measures have the common goal of keeping children safe and help learning take place.

### **What next?**

We know that it can be worrying when you see cases rise in your community or hear of new variants. At the time writing, the overall number of cases across Norfolk has not changed significantly. The rate is below the national average. Public health are monitoring local cases very closely for the emergence of new variants, and will directly contact affected people.

National guidance has been updated and from 29<sup>th</sup> November young people in secondary schools are expected to wear masks in communal areas unless they are exempt.

For children and young people on public transport or dedicated school transport, face coverings must be worn unless they are exempt.

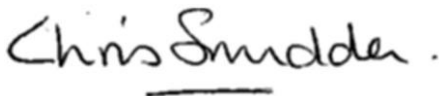
To keep ourselves and others safe, there are simple steps we can all take:

- **Hands** - Wash your hands frequently, and use alcohol gel when you cannot access running water.
- **Face** – Wear a face covering when required.
- **Space** – Keep your distance from others where possible
- **Fresh Air** – Meet outside where possible and keep indoor spaces well ventilated
- **Catch it, Bin it, Kill it** - [Use a tissue if you cough or sneeze](#)
- **Isolate when needed** – Isolate yourself if you develop symptoms, test positive for COVID-19 or if directed by NHS Test and Trace.
- **Get vaccinated** – You can book a vaccination [here](#)
- **Test Regularly** – Secondary age pupils should test twice weekly as a matter of routine. Testing prior to attending higher risk activities is also recommended.
- **Covid Symptoms?** If you have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, [book a PCR test](#).

Schools in Norfolk work hard to keep children safe and provide a great education. We continue to work closely with schools across Norfolk to provide guidance, help and support as needed.

Thank you for working so positively with your school and helping to keep down the spread of this disease.

Yours sincerely



**Chris Snudden**  
Director of Learning and Inclusion  
Norfolk County Council



**Louise Smith**  
Director of Public Health  
Norfolk County Council