

26th March 2021

Dear parent/carer

Since we last wrote to you, we've seen schools open more widely to all pupils and students, and education returning to something a bit more normal. We want to take the opportunity to thank those of you whose children were at home during the recent lockdown, for your hard work supporting your children with home learning. We know that it's a real challenge. It's wonderful to see children and young people back at school and able to see their friends, classmates and school staff once again. Social interaction is such an important part of learning for young people.

Schools continue to do everything they can to keep your children as safe from COVID-19 as possible. They continue to do an amazing job responding quickly to COVID-19 cases in students or staff to minimise the risk to others. Please do continue to be polite to school staff. They don't make the rules, they are following public health advice at all times and, whilst we know it can be frustrating sometimes when your child's bubble closes and you are once again back to home learning, they are only acting on professional advice and trying to keep everyone safe.

The wider opening of schools to all pupils and students was the first step on the Government's roadmap and as we look forward to the coming weeks and months, we will see further restrictions lifted if all goes to plan. We are all looking forward to a time when we can meet up with friends like we used to do more than a year ago, where we can go about our daily business without thinking about COVID-19, where we can go on holiday. We're on the right path, but it's really important we all do what we can to keep us moving in the right direction. It's a perilous path, and it's easy for us to fall off it if infection rates in Calderdale increase again. The more we can all do to stop the spread of the virus, the safer everyone will be and the less disruption there will be to education.

It is very important that all children and young people attend school or college. However, please do keep your child at home if they have any symptoms of COVID-19:

- a high temperature
- a new and continuous cough
- a loss or change to the sense of smell or taste

When a child with symptoms attends school, it doesn't just create the risk of transmission but also once again interrupts the education of all those involved and creates challenges for parents as all the children and adults the child had contact with may be required to self-isolate.

At the moment, we're still not allowed to meet up with others except for one other person from outside of our household. From the 29th March we're back to the Rule of 6, where up to 6 people can meet up (or two households if between them there are more than 6 household members). Both of these rules apply only where you meet up outside. There will still be no mixing with others indoors, unless they are part of your household or support bubble. You're allowed one household bubble to support you with childcare. More information about the lifting of restrictions is available here www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021-summary#roadmap-out-of-lockdown.

This remains really important, so do think carefully about what you do at the school gate and on the way back from school. It's easy to forget when you see people you might not have seen for some time – but it's an important protective measure. Please do keep up the good work by avoiding mixing with other households indoors. This applies to your children too – so no sleep overs or after school meet-ups please.

Finally, if you can wear face coverings at drop-off and pick-up if you're on foot that would be really helpful. It's an easy protective measure and can make a real difference. School staff wear them wherever it's feasible to do so and it will really support them in their efforts to keep your children safe.

We're really proud of the efforts our schools and our families have taken in Calderdale to help reduce COVID-19 infection. It's been a really tough year, and this week has been a timely reminder of that as we reflect on a year since the first death of a Calderdale resident. Over 330 people in Calderdale have died of COVID-19 – you may know of people who have lost their lives, they may even be family members. The roll out of the vaccination programme is a vital step towards reducing the impact of this horrible infection but all the other measures we have got used to over the last year are all still really important too.

If you or your child have any concerns about COVID-19, contact the Healthy Futures Calderdale school nursing team by phone on **0303 330 9974** or by text on **07480 635297 (young people)** or **07507 332157 (parents/carers)**.

Kind regards,



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