

Dear parent/carer/guardian,

Firstly, we would like to say a huge thank you to you for all your efforts during the latest lockdown. We know each family will have faced different challenges and experiences and that this has been a difficult time for many. We appreciate the support that you have shown in helping your child continue with their education during what has been exceptional circumstances.

Education staff are currently working towards the wider opening of schools and we continue to recognise their hard work and thank them for all the efforts in helping Herefordshire children to continue with their learning safely.

As you will be aware, schools and colleges will be welcoming students back from 8 March. These arrangements are based on the national guidance but will vary in individual schools and settings, particularly in relation to the initial testing of pupils of secondary age and above. The testing systems will depend on the physical space of each school and college, the number of pupils and also the staffing available. These details will be available directly through your child's school.

To keep your child and your family safe and the infection rates low, there will be increased safety measures in place in schools and colleges, in addition to the bubbles, social distancing, fresh air and hand washing. It might also be the case that some facilities at special schools may not be available immediately.

These new measures will include:

- Asymptomatic testing for pupils: Secondary age pupils will be tested 3 times on return. Secondary students will then be asked to test twice-weekly at home. Schools will inform you directly how the testing will be organised. When testing, it is really important to follow the instructions correctly both for undertaking the test and if a test gives a positive result. If a test gives a positive result, the whole household must self-isolate for 10 days and follow the instructions that will be given.
- School and college staff will be able to take part in regular testing.
- National guidance must be followed in relation to wearing face coverings, particularly in the case of secondary school pupils. There will be some exceptions for children with particular conditions.
- Please support your child's school by following their guidance and explain the measures to your child to ensure that they are well prepared before they return to school on 8 March. The guidance is different for primary schools and some special schools, so please check the information provided by your own child's school.

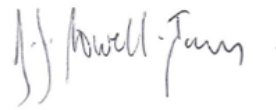
Council provided transport, and student public bus services will operate in full from 8 March and in the meantime, the transport team will continue to work with individual schools. Please note that face coverings must be worn on school transport for the whole of the journey, unless your child is exempt.

Finally, please also remember that the rules around households mixing remain in place and we ask you to continue to play your part by social distancing and wearing face coverings, particularly when dropping off and collecting your child to avoid the spread of the virus.

Yours sincerely



Chris Baird
DIRECTOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES



Rebecca Howell-Jones
ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH