

15th November 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

As you will be aware, due to a steep rise in case rates throughout October, Public Health Dorset, BCP Council and Dorset Council provided [additional guidance for educational settings](#) across the county to reduce transmission of COVID-19 for a 14-day period after half term.

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 we are in agreement that these measures should be extended until the end of November. We have looked closely at the data and there are a number of epidemiological reasons why we support the continuation of these measures:

- Our local case rates remain significantly above the England average, and are now above the South West average
- Although case rates have been declining, they are not coming down quickly, and the decrease is much slower than in other regions
- Case rates remain the highest amongst school-aged children, particularly the 10-14 age group which has a case rate of around 1,500 cases per 100,000 in both local authority areas
- Although the situation is improving, removing measures too early could lead to cases increasing rapidly again

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 November and we will provide more information to schools ahead of this.

Yours sincerely

Public Health Dorset