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Dear Parent/Carer

With COVID-19 cases rising again in Bedford Borough I am writing to ask for your help to control the spread of infection.

Over the summer we saw a fall in COVID-19 cases locally, and I'd like to thank you for everything that you did to achieve this and the sacrifices you made to keep all of our families and communities safe.

However, like many places across the country, COVID-19 cases are rising once more in Bedford Borough. This means that we will continue to have cases in our nurseries, schools and colleges that come from the community, but it does not necessarily follow that transmission has occurred in the educational setting. The local Public Health team is working closely with Public Health England and our education settings to ensure that they remain safely open for as many children and young people as possible.

## How you can help

We need your help to break the chain of transmission and bring the virus under control. As well as asking you to continue to observe **Hands – Face – Space (wash your hands** frequently with soap for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitiser; wear a **face covering** correctly when you are required to do so; keep **2 metres** apart from anyone you don't live with), we are also asking parents and carers to take the following actions with their families:

- If your child displays coronavirus symptoms (high temperature, continuous cough, or a loss of or change in sense of taste or smell) please keep them at home, request a test and notify the nursery, school or college. If your child's test is positive, they will be advised to self-isolate for 10 days and the household for 14 days. You can book a free test online at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.
- Please limit the number of social contacts you and your family have outside of your household, avoid mixing in situations where social distancing cannot be maintained, and meet outside where possible. Remember that meeting in

- groups of more than 6 is illegal and you could face a fine of at least £1,000. Please explain this to your children/young people, as they have a responsibility to follow these rules too. This remains important during half term.
- If your child uses school or public transport, please emphasise to them the importance of getting on and off the bus in an orderly fashion, not crowding onto a busy bus if another bus is coming, observing mask wearing at all times (unless exempt), following seating plans where these are in place, and keeping the windows open to ensure the bus is properly ventilated.

The NHS Test and Trace system has a vital role to play in controlling the virus. The NHS has launched a new app to help us safely check into venues and inform us if we've been in contact with someone that has tested positive. To find out more and download the app please visit <https://covid19.nhs.uk>. If you are contacted by the NHS Test and Trace system you must follow their advice and stay at home for 14 days to avoid any risk of spreading the virus to others.

More information about how we can all help tackle the virus, details about the local situation and support that is available can be found on our website [www.bedford.gov.uk/covid19](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/covid19).

I know these measures are difficult when we want to meet with friends and family, but we have seen that they can make a difference. We must do all we can to protect those we love and care for at this difficult time and avoid the further restrictions that are being imposed in other areas.

Yours sincerely,



**Vicky Head**  
Interim Director of Public Health