



29th November 2021

Advice to Education Settings

A new coronavirus variant called as Omicron has been found in the UK. Although there are no known cases of this variant in Trafford, it is especially important that all settings across Trafford take precautionary measures to stop the spread.

In October, in response to the increasing rate and subsequent peak in Covid infection across Trafford, a number of recommendations were made to Early Years and Education Settings. This has continuously been reviewed every 2 weeks with the measures remaining in place. A further review date was set for the 29th November, with the local enhanced measures including;

- face coverings for secondary pupils in communal areas
- face coverings for all staff in communal areas
- daily LFD testing for household contacts in Key stage 2 and above
- routine LFD asymptomatic testing
- reinforcing face covering during travel
- parents/carers wearing face coverings during drop off and collection.

Cases still remain high in Trafford. In addition, on 27th November 2021, the government announced wider national measures in response to the Omicron Covid variant and the DfE have stated that face coverings are now compulsory in communal areas and on school transport for year 7 and above. Face coverings will not be required in classrooms and exemptions will remain in place for those who have a medical reason not to wear one.

In addition to face coverings, the government has implemented the following restrictions:

- introducing isolation for 10 days for close contacts of suspected omicron cases (close contacts will be contacted by test & trace)
- anyone returning from international travel must take a private PCR test on day 2 and isolate until they receive a negative result
- staff and students should continue to be strongly encouraged to test themselves twice a week using lateral flow tests
- education settings may want to consider whether to go ahead with any planned international trips at the current time, given the potential risk to education from the need to isolate and test when returning to the UK

In light of Trafford's cases remaining high and the latest government guidance, it is recommended that both local measures and government measures will remain in place up until the Christmas break.

These measures are temporary and precautionary while we find out more information about the new variant.

Trafford Council's Public Health Team will continue to work closely with our schools to reduce the number of Covid cases and ensure our schools can remain open and children can continue to access in-person education.

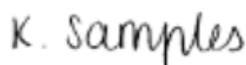
We understand that news of a new variant will be concerning, and how frustrating it is to continue with these measures. With the weather changing, we really need to be keeping people safe and reducing the number of Covid infections.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Helen Gollins
Director of Public Health (Acting)
Trafford Council



Karen Samples
Director Education Services
Trafford Council