



**Public Health Department
Swindon Borough Council
Wat Tyler West Building
Beckhampton Street
Swindon
SN1 2JG**

August 2020

Dear parent/carer,

I'd like to thank you for supporting all the changes that schools have had to make due to COVID-19 and to thank the schools themselves for doing everything they can to protect children, parents, carers and staff. It's not easy but it is up to all of us to stop the spread of the virus, and keep everyone safe.

We know that school has an incredibly positive impact on children and that school attendance for children and young people is very important. Despite the current COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that we get children back into education whilst being mindful of the anxieties that parents and children may be experiencing as we head back to the classroom.

Schools will work slightly differently when they reopen in September and we know you and your child might feel anxious about this – whether your children are starting for the first time, or returning. We want to reassure you that we are reviewing the situation regularly and supporting schools and settings to reopen safely. Your school will already have been in touch with important messages, including start and finish times, and where to drop-off and pick up, so be sure to look out for those.

Emerging evidence suggests that children may be at lower risk of infection than adults and often have much milder symptoms. However, we recognise that as broader lockdown measures across our communities reduce, transmission of COVID-19 to children in schools may occur. Control measures such as hand and surface hygiene, social distancing, cohorting to reduce the number of daily contacts, and directional controls to reduce face-to-face contact remain key elements of maintaining COVID-19 secure school environments and minimising risk.

Local increases in COVID-19 in some of our communities may lead to an increased risk of school outbreaks occurring and this is to be expected. Early identification and quickly managing outbreaks of COVID-19 in schools is essential as part of a local response which Swindon Borough Council and Public Health England, along with the school settings, are prepared for.

Parents should be aware that they should not send their children to school if they have any COVID-19 symptoms, even if these are mild. Anyone with symptoms should self-isolate and book a test via the national online portal (search NHS test) or by calling NHS 119. Symptoms to look out for include high temperature, new persistent cough and / or loss of sense of smell or taste.

Thank you once again for supporting these changes and following guidance to help stop the spread, keep your children safe and protect others. Swindon: it is up to all of us.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Maddern', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steve Maddern

Director of Public Health