

## Director of Public Health

Prof Jim McManus, FFPH, CPsychol, FBPsS,  
CSci, FRSB, CharteredFCIPD



## Operations Director Education

Simon Newland

By Email

All Head Teachers

Hertfordshire County Council  
County Hall  
CHO231  
Pegs Lane  
Hertford SG13 8DE

**Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Colleague

### **Further support for management of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Education settings**

We are writing further to the desires expressed by Heads to ensure advice on management of COVID-19 issues in your settings is as quick and tailored as possible, and that challenges in accessing testing run by the national testing agency are addressed.

We also recognise the stress placed on you at this time and the huge amount of work you have done and are doing to respond to COVID-19. We are working hard to do everything we can to support you, and we want to let you know of what we will be doing

### **Access to testing**

On Monday we launched locally a new keyworker testing service commissioned by the NHS and County Council to enable education setting staff to access testing urgently. We have as of today doubled the capacity at this service. I attach updated information to enable you to access this service and guide you through these processes. We continue to advocate with Government for the issues with Test and Trace to be resolved.

### **Direct support to Education settings in preventing and managing cases**

Although we already have a support team in place to help education settings, including two Head Teachers, Public Health, Education and Infection Control Nurses, we have been working to create additional support for education settings. As a result of the recent significant rise in demand for Public Health England support, and delays you have reported, the County Council has decided to bring this work forward as a matter of urgency.

As a result, from Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September, the first phase of locally commissioned additional support for education settings will go live in Hertfordshire. This means that:

1. during working hours, we will handle all calls for support from education settings locally

2. we will have a new helpdesk with additional capacity locally to manage this
3. we will have in place a multidisciplinary pool of environmental health, public health, experienced school professionals (including two Head Teachers who have joined the central team this week), infection control specialists and others taking calls and providing advice and support

The impact of this for you locally is that you should only have to call PHE outside working hours and at weekends, that you can get advice and support locally through our helpdesk and that the helpdesk will pass any additional support needs on to the right person (infection control, experienced head teachers as appropriate). An updated flowchart and protocol have been sent to you with this note giving details of who to contact.

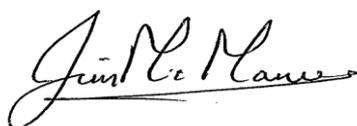
We would ask you to report cases to **this system locally**, and **not to PHE or DfE**. The purpose of this is to enable you to get access to advice and support promptly.

The second phase of this will be:

1. To further augment the multidisciplinary pool of specialists who will provide more details support for education providers
2. This will include a team of professionals made up of health professionals, environmental health, health and safety officers and teachers who are contacting and visiting schools to provide them with advice and support to deal with COVID-19 issues
3. To roll out updated risk assessment and close contact guidance designed specifically to help schools plan and implement teaching bubbles in a way that means they can react to suspected or positive COVID-19 case(s) with the least disruption to children's education. This should reduce the need and number of children asked to self-isolate unnecessarily
4. Additional communication tools are being worked on to try and provide some clarity on symptoms and when and how to access NHS support. In advance of this we will be sending you a letter next week to send to all parents

We will continue to work to provide support on this. We are aware of the enormous pressure on you at this time and we will work hard to play our part in supporting you.

Yours sincerely



**Jim McManus**  
Director of Public Health



**Simon Newland**  
Operations Director, Education