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Dear Head Teacher / CEO

I thought it would be helpful to provide you with an update on the Covid situation in our schools currently, as well as offer some considerations and advice that you may or may not wish to follow, for any planned activities in the lead up to the Christmas period.

Unfortunately, the number of cases in Doncaster communities continues to cause concern, and although we have seen some reduction in the number of positive cases overall, many of our schools are seeing a rise in cases.

We have an increasing number of outbreaks in schools affecting both pupils and staff with some seeing acute staffing issues due to absence. The number of Doncaster residents being treated in hospital for Covid remains persistently high.

### **Christmas activities and events**

As always, we are mindful of the need to balance the overall wellbeing of children with how we reduce opportunities for transmission of the virus in school settings. Many of you will be planning Christmas events, including performances, visits and opportunities for fundraising.

Large gatherings of pupils indoors for events such as concerts will increase transmission risks, as will bringing parents and carers together in larger groups and in close proximity in an enclosed space for an extended period of time. Bringing parents and carers on to the school site also increases the risk of transmission to the school site.

Individual schools understand their school estate best and can take decisions about which, if any, activities they are able to offer in the lead up to Christmas. We are advising the following considerations when planning Christmas activities and events:

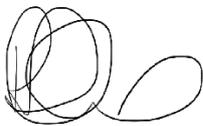
- A **risk assessment** should be completed for any planned Christmas activities that include bringing parents and carers on site. The risk assessment should take account of limiting numbers to allow distancing, ventilation if indoor space is used and provision of handwashing facilities. It is important that parents and carers understand that they should not attend the school site if they have symptoms and you may wish to ask them to

undertake lateral flow testing at home before the activity. Recording activities or live streaming events will provide parents and carers with an option to watch events if they do not feel comfortable attending the school site, if they are feeling unwell or if plans need to be changed at last minute. These expectations should be communicated to parents, carers and children in advance.

- In situations where there is an **outbreak**, it is vital that the opportunities for transmission to the wider community are minimised, particularly as we move to the school holidays where extended families and friends often plan to get together. Where there is an **outbreak** in a school, we recommend that activities that bring parents and carers on to the school site should not take place or should be cancelled. As outbreaks can emerge quickly, it is recommended that expectations are set with children, young people and their families and that provision to moving performances and activities online, where possible, is included in planning and risk assessment.
- Where there are planned visits to pantomimes and concerts, you may choose to cohort children into smaller groups, both in travel to the event and while at the event.

Once again, this guidance is optional and I understand that taking these considerations into account may be disappointing for some schools and reassuring for others. Thank you once again for the support you continue to provide to families. We are hopeful that 2022 will be a more positive one for us all.

Yours faithfully



**Rachael Leslie**  
**Deputy Director of Public Health**