

Parents and Carers

**DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SKILLS**

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Your Ref.

Our Ref. LR/cd

2 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

### **Supporting our Solihull schools**

We now approach another phase in fighting the coronavirus as we reach the end of the second national lockdown and move into a new tiered system. Solihull has entered Tier 3 which is the highest level of restrictions. For schools, however, there will be little if any change. They will remain open and should do so regardless of which tier Solihull is in, unless there are very specific circumstances for individual schools. If there are any changes, details will be sent to you directly from your child's school.

The transmission rates in schools remain relatively low and where there have been positive cases, there is very little evidence that transmission has actually occurred within schools. The measures that school leaders, teachers and other school staff are taking to minimise risk to pupils and to themselves are working well, with schools remaining safe places. That doesn't mean however, that it's possible to avoid disruption to education at very short notice when children in affected bubbles need to self-isolate; or longer term disruption to arrangements around arrival at school, break times and leaving at the end of the school day. It remains vitally important that you maintain social distancing and if requested by your school, please wear a face covering when waiting to drop off or collect your children. These simple measures, together with regular handwashing, remain the best way to keep us all safe.

When schools need to deal with a positive case there is a very clear process they have to adhere to - they work closely with the council and public health, with health advice always being followed. The response from schools may look different depending on individual school circumstances and across different year groups or phases of education. However, we want you to be assured that the actions school leaders are taking are necessary and detailed guidance will have been provided to them by public health teams in the council and at Public Health England.

We are sorry to report that some of our head teachers and other school staff have experienced inappropriate, aggressive and intimidating behaviour from a small number of parents, carers and members of the wider community when they are having to respond to positive Covid cases, or monitor other arrangements. Whilst we understand the increased anxiety and frustrations that the current restrictions and global pandemic bring for us all, we must continue to support the difficult decisions school leaders are required to make. We know that they are doing a truly remarkable job in not only doing their utmost to ensure that staff and your children remain safe and well, but also maintaining a focus upon providing a high quality of education that will have an impact far beyond the current tough times we are living through.

Where there are instances of abusive behaviour, we have advised schools to report these cases to the police immediately. The council takes a zero tolerance view of abuse and intimidation of school staff and will support them with any measures deemed necessary, should they be faced with behaviour which is simply unacceptable. We realise that this is coming from a very small but vocal minority of parents and carers, but we need to make our position of support for Solihull schools very clear.

We know that it can be difficult to communicate with your child's school at the current time given the need to keep visitors on site to a minimum. However, please contact your child's school through the ways made available to you. This is not how schools would choose to operate, but the only way they are able to under the current restrictions.

It has been a long term and unfortunately schools are unable to celebrate Christmas with parents and family members in their usual ways. The joyous Nativities and carol concerts, which we all look forward to so much every year cannot go ahead as they would in normal times. The measures schools have put in place and the sacrifices we are all making will make a difference and we will come through this pandemic by sticking together and supporting each other.

We want to thank you for your continued support of your child's school during these difficult times. We really do have some wonderful schools and inspirational school leaders, teachers and staff. What has been achieved in Solihull schools since the start of this pandemic has been remarkable - Solihull really is a wonderful place to live, work and learn.

May we take this opportunity to wish you and your family a safe and happy Christmas and let's all cooperate to continue to fight this virus next year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Louise Rees". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that serves as a separator.

Louise Rees  
**Director of Children's Services and Skills**