

COVID AND SCHOOLS

The schools have continued to work tirelessly to keep things as normal as possible in school during unprecedented situations. Some of the changes we have made will remain with us for sometime yet, some as new ways of working and engaging with you.

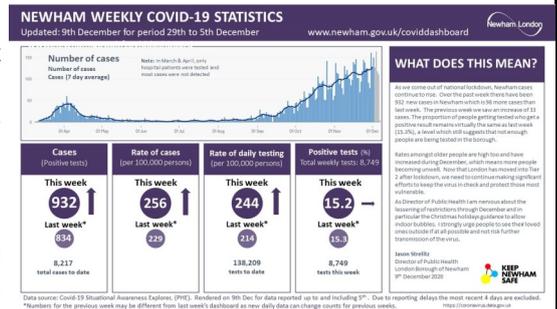


Headteachers go into the role knowing they will work long hours. However, during this time they have worked effectively 24/7 to make sure all necessary actions in relation to Covid are taken to keep everyone safe. They will now be on call right up until Christmas Eve as requested by the DfE to support track and trace (more later). As I mentioned last time, this is taking a mental and emotional toll on them. **I know it is difficult to see them in the same way as before but please do get a thanks to them some how for all they have done to keep the community informed and safe, along with all the other staff.**



Although I understand how frustrating things might have been with you, thank you for your full understanding and support when children have been sent home, or they have been without their regular teacher. Newham is once again one of the areas that has the highest number of Covid-cases and this means it is circulating in the community. There is light at the end of tunnel with the vaccine being rolled out, but this will take several months to reach those most of risk before the general population are vaccinated as standard. **Until then we must continue with the basic preventative measures of hands, face, space as well as follow the current Tier 2 guidance. This week London is on the brink of going into Tier 3 restrictions. If it does there will be even stricter measures in place which will be hard for us all.**

Newham is one area where everyone is being encouraged to get tested, whether they have symptoms or not. This is to particularly detect those positive with Covid-19 who are asymptomatic. Do take advantage of this opportunity. Both schools are possibly going to be sites for regular staff testing in the new year. We will let you know more information as soon as we have it. In the meantime do look out for all the Newham infographics about staying safe over Christmas and the rules in place. The Newham Covid dashboard gives you latest figures each week and whilst not as sharp an increase in cases the last couple of weeks the statistics are still worrying and going up—www.newham.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-dashboard/1



You may have also heard that as of Monday 14th December the time required to isolate (or quarantine) will change from 14 days to 10 days. The schools will reflect this in any future need to send children home.



END OF TERM AND COVID

You may have read the headlines last week of Headteachers being on call until 24th December and as a result the DfE announced schools can use Friday 18th December as an Inset Day—so Headteachers only need to be on call until 23rd December!!! Unfortunately, this is just another example of how out of touch with schools the DfE seems to be. Schools can not arrange a meaningful training day at short notice—or for parents to arrange child-care if necessary. It would also mean that staff and children would have to do an extra day in July.



As we already have arrangements in place for Fridays we have chosen not to close. Our current plan is to close to children as usual at Friday lunchtime. **However, we recognise that you may want to safeguard your Christmas period as much as possible and make your own decisions about attendance at the end of term. We need to know if you do decide to keep your child at home but we will not penalise you for this decision.**

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Could your child be entitled to a

FREE school meal?

Both schools have seen a large increase in numbers of pupils qualifying to free school meals. Much of this will be as a result of the pandemic and the economic impact on jobs. Some, however, may just be as a result of the ability to claim vouchers over the holiday period. Whatever the circumstance, it is very saddening but if the later it means that the schools have missed out on thousands of pounds it would have been entitled to for pupil premium. As a result of the increase in numbers, Central Park will be entitled to an extra c.£50k and Dersingham even more next year.



CHOOSE FROM

Sainsbury's **TESCO** **ASDA**

The DfE relented and eventually gave Councils a winter Covid grant, much of which covers food vouchers for children over the holiday period. You should already have been informed of the method each school is using. Over the Christmas period this is an extra £30 for each child. It is

only being issued to families we know are entitled to Free School Meals. **If you think you may also be eligible then please do visit the Newham website and complete the short form through the link.** If you register successfully the school will be informed. **Do not miss out as these vouchers will be made available throughout 2021 as well.**

<https://www.newham.gov.uk/schools-education/free-school-meals/2documentId=502&categoryId=20004>

The schools will also get an increase in pupil premium grant that goes a long way in supporting disadvantaged children in their learning.

If you feel you are going to struggle over the Christmas break then do let the school know as soon as possible and they will support you the best they can. Newham Food Alliance is available and you can refer yourself to them, but a referral from the school may carry more weight.

<https://www.newham.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-support-vulnerable-high-risk-people/3?documentId=355&categoryId=20143>



RELATIONSHIP, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION (RSHE)

After a slight pause, we will stepping up our work with you, and staff, to be ready to deliver the statutory programme from April 2021. You will be aware that we are adopting the Newham policy and approach to RSHE which has been approved by local religious leaders, as well as the DfE and Ofsted. As we started back last year, you will be able to comment about age-readiness and materials being used.

Please engage fully with the consultation. Of course, we can not do this face-to-face as we would like to do but there will be different ways for you to give us your views and will always meet up with individuals safely, and by arrangement, should they want to speak to staff.

HAVE A SAFE CHRISTMAS

Many of you will be celebrating Christmas. As with all the other religious events this year, they will be celebrated differently. By following the national advice I wish you all a safe and merry Christmas. Others may not be celebrating Christmas but please still follow the rules and have a peaceful time. We want everyone to remain safe and well. There are very few people who have been untouched by this virus but sadly some of you will be spending Christmas without loved ones who have passed as a result of Covid-19 this year, my thoughts are with you.



HANDS



FACE



SPACE



Darren Williams, Executive Headteacher

Darren Williams