

Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy
Director of Population Health
Tameside MBC
Market Place, Ashton Under Lyne, Tameside, OL6 6BH

www.tameside.gov.uk
e-mail : Jeanelle.degruchy@tameside.gov.uk
Ask for Jeanelle de Gruchy
Direct Line **0161 342 5615**
Date: Thursday 18th June 2020

Dear Colleague,

I wrote to you last week (12 June) noting the decreasing trend in the infection rate, the progress on contact tracing and outbreak management, and the preparatory work done within your educational settings and advising that cautious wider opening can begin from 22 June 2020.

I remain confident in this position and the advice on wider opening from Monday. You have made excellent preparations for this, including undertaking and completing risk assessments and instituting the necessary infection control measures to make wider opening as safe as possible.

However, I would again stress that wider opening should only be done at the pace individual schools and childcare settings feel confident to manage safely.

As you know all Tameside schools and many early years settings have remained open throughout this 'closure period' and we are incredibly proud of this. The efforts you have made to support key worker children and to encourage the attendance of vulnerable children have been exemplary. Attendance at Tameside schools has been consistently above the national average. Indeed over the last two weeks, and notwithstanding the delay to our wider opening, attendance has increased further.

Now we face new challenges together: ensuring children and young people, their families, staff, and the wider community all remain safe as we widen school opening to include early years; Reception, Years 1 and 6; all ages in special schools; and face-to-face contact for Years 10 and 12. The work we have done together is critical in enabling this to happen. We are grateful to you and to our colleagues in the Council and the NHS locally for the thorough, considered and supportive approach that has been taken.

Of course, starting to make changes to ease lockdown is a balance. Settings will be operating differently to help reduce risk. We know that returning to school or child care may cause anxiety for some, and each family will want to consider this fully. We understand that these are decisions determined by individual family circumstances, however we would encourage all children who are able to attend to do so.

We know there may be some cases of COVID-19 associated with schools and early years settings, there may also be outbreaks. We are satisfied that we have the right arrangements in place to manage this and that you are aware of these through the webinars and the Step-by-step Guidance issued last week.

Evidence on COVID-19 is limited due to the short time that the disease has been studied. However we do know that the disease in children is usually mild and self-limiting; also children do not appear to play a major role in transmission, and younger children transmit less than older children.

Reducing the transmission of COVID-19 remains a priority. There is always more we can do to minimise risk through emphasising the need to:

- Continue to wash our hands regularly with soap and hot water for a minimum of 20 seconds
- Maintain social distancing and ensure we don't become a contact
- Isolate and access a test if we develop symptoms
- Isolate if we are a contact of someone who has COVID-19

Be assured that I will continue to monitor the situation closely and will write to you should there be any change in my advice. Thank you for your strong and steady leadership at this time.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'de Gruchy', written in a light grey or blue ink.

Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy
Director of Population Health