

Children & Young People
Oldham Council, Civic Centre, Level 3,
West Street, Oldham, OL1 1UT

Dear Parents and Carers

As you know, it is the government's plan that all children and young people, in all year groups, will return to education full-time from the beginning of the autumn term. Our early years settings, schools and colleges in Oldham are delighted to be welcoming back your children. It is vital that our children and young people return to school and college, for their educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development.

The Chief Medical Officers from all four nations in the United Kingdom have made it clear that the overall risks to children from coronavirus (COVID-19) in relation to education settings is low and that the risks associated with not being in school certainly outweigh those of being in school. We want to take this opportunity to tell you of the measures we have taken in Oldham to ensure that your children can return to education safely, and how you can help us.

Oldham's education settings have put in place a range of protective measures to ensure children remain safe. Your child's school or college will have completed a health and safety risk assessment as part of their plans to re-open in September. As part of this assessment, education settings will:

- ensure that everyone cleans their hands more often than usual, including when they arrive, when they return from breaks, and before and after eating.
- promote the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach, to ensure good respiratory hygiene.
- enhance cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces more often.

Nurseries and childminders will also minimise contact between individuals where they can. This could mean using different rooms for different age groups and keeping those groups apart.

Schools and colleges will minimise contact and encourage maintaining distance as far as possible. They will decide how best to do this because it will be different for each school or college. This will involve asking children and young people to:

- stay within specified separate groups (or bubbles).
- maintain distance between individuals where possible

You will also be aware from recent press coverage and messages from Oldham Council that additional restrictions designed to curb the spread of coronavirus are now in force in Oldham (<https://www.oldham.gov.uk/coronavirus>). As part of these additional restrictions in Oldham, face coverings should now be worn by adults and pupils in our secondary schools and colleges when moving around in communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain, unless there is a valid exception to the requirement to wear a face covering. Face coverings are not required in early years settings and primary schools. If you have a child that is due to attend a secondary school or college, we would be grateful if you could ensure that they arrive each day with a face covering. Face coverings can be created quickly and easily using the following guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>

Additionally, Oldham Council has put in place a process to support schools in dealing with any suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus in educational settings.

If you have concerns about your child returning to school or college because you consider they may have specific risk factors, you should discuss these with your school or college. They will be able to explain ways in which they are changing things to reduce risks.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that staff and children remain safe whilst they are in an education setting. We would be grateful if you could play your part by:

- Not sending your child to their nursery, childminder, school or college if they are showing coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or someone in their household is showing symptoms.
- Arranging a test if you or your child develops symptoms and inform your nursery, childminder, school or college of the results (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/>)
- If the test is positive, follow guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>)
- Not congregating around the entrance or exit if you are dropping-off or picking-up your child at the start and end of each day. Please maintain a safe social distance from others during these periods.
- Following the national guidance on coronavirus, including regular hand washing, social distancing, use of face coverings and limiting the contact you have with people outside of your household.

It is really important that you help nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges to implement these actions by following the advice set out in this note.

Finally, I am sure you will agree that regular school attendance is essential for the educational, social and personal development of children and young people so thank you in advance for your support.

If you have any questions or queries from this note please get in touch so we can support you to achieve this in every way we can.

Thank you for your support.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerard Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gerard Jones
Managing Director of Children &
Young People

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katrina Stephens". The signature is more compact and less cursive than the one to its left.

Katrina Stephens
Director of Public Health