

Office of the Medical Officer of Health

19-21 Broad Street | St Helier
Jersey | JE2 3RR

Friday, 12 February 2021

Dear parents/carers/students and the education community,

I would like to thank everyone across our school, college and nursery community and all students and parents for playing their part to ensure the risk of COVID-19 is minimised and to support children and young people's education.

As we approach half-term, and the subsequent reopening of schools, this month, I would like to remind everyone of some important health advice to be aware of and would like to encourage parents and carers to continue to discuss this information with their children and young people.

COVID-19 Symptoms:

It is important that all of us – including those who make up the school, college and nursery communities, are vigilant for the symptoms of COVID-19 and understand what action you should take if someone develops them, either at school or at home.

It is essential that pupils who have any of the three main COVID-19 symptoms do not attend school, nursery or other childcare settings and must self-isolate with all members of their household.

The three main symptoms of COVID-19 to be aware of are:

- New continuous cough
- Fever/high temperature
- Change or loss of smell and/or taste

If a young person or a child in your care develops any of the three main symptoms, they should self-isolate and you should call the freephone Coronavirus helpline on 0800 735 5566 as soon as possible to get advice and arrange a test. Diarrhoea and vomiting can also be a feature of COVID-19 and are more common in children than adults.

Mask wearing:

All school, college and nursery staff should wear masks in education settings including all adult visitors.

Secondary school-aged students and those in higher education are strongly recommended to wear masks in all areas of the buildings including in class and when

moving around in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot be maintained.

This does not include when eating, drinking or undertaking PE.

Storage and disposal of masks

It is important to store and dispose of masks properly, making sure to always wash your hands before handling a new mask and after handling a used mask.

To store a mask before or after use we recommend a non-porous disposable plastic bag (such as a sandwich bag) or a reusable sturdy plastic container that can be wiped with 70% to 90% alcohol sanitiser and left for a minute to dry before re-use.

Single-use masks, inner filters and other fabric masks should be disposed of carefully in normal household waste bins (non-recyclable). Try to avoid touching the inside of a mask or the middle of a filter layer and wash your hands thoroughly afterwards. If using an outdoor bin, try to use a bin with a closing lid.

Washing cloth masks

When washing masks, we recommend a hot wash cycle around 60 degrees Celsius or higher with soap or detergent.

If a mask has a middle filter layer, we recommend replacing the filter at least daily and disposing of the old filter. It is important to wash and dry your hands thoroughly for 20 seconds before handling a new filter and again after handling a used filter.

Do not use disinfectants to clean masks as these can soak into the fabric and later be breathed in causing health problems and/or skin irritation.

Further information is available in the education and childcare section on gov.je/coronavirus

After-school gatherings and half-term:

Children and young people remain at a very low risk of more severe COVID-19 disease and the safety of children, staff and their families remain the absolute priority.

Therefore, we would urge parents and carers to please follow the current gatherings and public health guidance as soon as your child leaves the school gates.

Please remember to keep a distance of 2 metres or more, especially when dropping off or picking up children from school or nursery.

Everyone is strongly advised to continue to follow the gatherings guidance and to avoid indoor mixing between households. This means you should not go into other people's

homes or gardens, which includes any after-school play arrangements or parties with school friends.

Families are instead encouraged to take up the offer of the various opportunities provided to children and young people through youth services and private clubs and associations. These controlled settings are safer than getting together in private homes because safety plans and risk assessments have been put in place to protect children and adults.

It is an offence to take part in a gathering of more than 10 people outside of your home.

So, if you're meeting people outside of your home including children meeting school friends or over the half-term break, please remember that all gatherings in outdoor public places must not exceed 10 people. Please keep up-to-date with changing public health guidance as we progress through the stages of re-connection.

I appreciate the huge efforts being made by parents, carers, students, school, college and nursery staff who continue to follow the public health guidelines, which helps to keep our community safe.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ivan Muscat', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Ivan Muscat MBE

Deputy Medical Officer of Health