

To all Somerset LMC Practices

25th June 2020

Dear Colleagues

Enquiries from parents in relation to children returning to school

The LMC is providing this advisory letter which can be used by practices to respond to enquiries from parents in relation to returning to school, following the Government's announcement that a phased opening of schools can commence from 1st June.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health [RCPCH] has guidance on this issue, which is of understandable concern to many parents; this is available at:-

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/covid-19-talking-children-families-about-returning-school-guiding-principles>

The RCPCH advise that UK and international clinical evidence confirms that Covid19 infection is generally milder in children than in adults and most infected children have no or very mild symptoms, with very few developing a more serious illness.

Attendance at school also plays a key role in promoting children's health, social and mental wellbeing and the vast majority of children, except those who require continued shielding, will benefit from returning to school.

The RCPCH advises it may be helpful to categorise children into five groups:-

1. Shielded children: these children have been identified as clinically very vulnerable under the CMOs eligibility criteria and should **not** return to school at present
2. Children who have medical conditions for which they receive on-going care only from their GP are overwhelmingly likely to benefit from returning to school when their year group does

Somerset Local Medical Committee Crown Medical Centre Venture Way Taunton TA2 8QY

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3. Children who have medical conditions for which receive on-going secondary or specialist care or who are currently receiving treatment at hospital are more likely to benefit from returning to school when their year group does, but parents (and older children) may wish to contact their Consultant if they have any concerns or wish to balance the potential risks involved
4. Children who live in households with a person who is shielding should only attend schools if stringent social distancing is possible and children are of an age and capacity where they can understand and follow such instructions. If this is not possible such children should not return to school. Children of households without a clinically identified shielding member can return to school
5. All other children should return to school when their year group does so

Parents can be reassured that schools will follow official advice when re-opening and this may include, noting that different approaches may apply at individual schools:

- Staggered break and mealtimes
- Staggered drop off and collection times
- Smaller class sizes, and reconfiguring the lay-out of classrooms
- Encouraging regular hand washing
- Introducing regular cleaning routines in classrooms, including door handles, handrails, tabletops, work and play equipment and toys

GPs cannot provide individualised risk assessments in relation to children returning to school, but if the enquiry relates to a child who is a Group 3, above, parents can be advised to contact their child's Consultant if they need further advice.

With best wishes



Dr Barry Moyse
Medical Director

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