

Media Release

Date: 24 January 2021

Schools, colleges and early years providers closed to ALL students after cases confirmed in seven education settings

Due to the number of confirmed staff and student cases of COVID-19, the Director of Public Health has closed schools, colleges and early years providers (pre-schools, nurseries and child-minders) to ALL students for the next two days.

Closing sites on Monday and Tuesday will support Public Health efforts to contact trace and test as many students and staff as possible, after 18 cases were confirmed across seven education settings since Friday night. However, this is a rapidly evolving situation and more cases are expected to be confirmed.

Director of Public Health, Dr Nicola Brink, took the decision to close education sites to all students – including vulnerable students and children of essential workers – to help support our principle objective to stop the rapid transmission of COVID-19.

The scheduling team will contact relevant student groups and staff at schools where cases have been confirmed to book them in for tests, **if these are required. Please do not contact Public Health to instigate testing yourselves.** However, if you or your children develop symptoms please contact the clinical helpline 756938/756969 or your GP. For more information about symptoms please visit <https://covid19.gov.gg/guidance/symptoms>.

All sites where cases have been confirmed will be deep cleaned and the situation will be reviewed on Tuesday before any further decision is taken.

Schools and the College will begin a soft start to Distance Learning from tomorrow afternoon and information will be shared with parents in the days ahead. Schools will be in touch with parents to provide relevant materials although it is important to note that this Distance Learning will not seek to replicate a normal school day.

Dr Nicola Brink, Director of Public Health, said:

‘We are concerned with regard to both the number of case identified, as well as their spread across seven separate education settings. As we know there are many connections between schools via staff or families, we are expecting more positive cases to be identified. Our contact tracing team is working as hard as possible to

locate everyone who needs to be tested, and this closure will support our efforts. It will help us build a better picture of what is going on.

'We know this will cause some issues for parents of vulnerable students and those who are essential workers. But it is really important that we don't have sites open for those students until we have had the opportunity to put into place measures to reduce any risk in educational settings where we know there are cases. We are closing all education sites because we simply don't know the scale of the problem and we need to assess this carefully.'

Ends