

Media Release

Date: 13 September 2021

Further information on current measures in place to minimise disruption to education for contacts of cases

Statement from Dr Nicola Brink, Director of Public Health:

‘As expected we have detected a number of cases of COVID-19 as part of our return to education programme and have currently detected cases in a total of five schools. This is what we expected and what we have prepared for.

‘When putting in place measures specific to managing cases of COVID-19 in education settings, our priority is to ensure students identified as contacts can continue going to school so their learning is not disrupted, as long as they remain symptom-free and have negative lateral flow tests. We are all trying to live responsibly with COVID-19 and asking students identified as contacts to not attend any extra-curricular activities/sports/clubs during the 10 days in which they are taking daily lateral flow tests, is part of that responsibility. We are also asking that identified educational contacts limit their social and other activities outside of education as part living responsibly with COVID for the 10-day period they are undertaking surveillance testing.

‘Being able to keep children who are contacts of positive cases in school is a big step forward from what was possible last term, but children are still a largely unvaccinated group and if we take no precautions at all, there is the potential for cases to spread. If case numbers rise high enough, quickly enough, then even with our excellent levels of vaccination in the Bailiwick, we could see more people becoming ill and needing hospital care. We need to consider incremental steps when dealing with such cases in these first couple of weeks of term to allow us to assess the current situation and ensure that doesn’t happen.

‘We’re aware of some of the concerns being voiced by those involved in extra-curricular clubs and activities today and I want to explain our guidance, and reassure people that we intend and hope for this to be very temporary measures, just while we monitor the first couple of weeks of the school term.

‘I know not being able to play football, or go to dancing or any other activity outside of school may disappoint any student who has been identified as a contact, but we are asking the community to continue supporting these measures during this transition phase where we have just had thousands of students return to education. I hope clubs

and groups don't feel they need to cancel their activities entirely because, while we are seeing cases in schools as expected, the numbers remain relatively low and the vast majority of children are not contacts of cases who will still benefit hugely from taking part.

'We are monitoring this very carefully and we really do intend for this to be a temporary measure which plan to reassess in the next few weeks and hope we can relax at the beginning of October, if not sooner.'