

Media Release

Date: 16 March 2022

Education re-introduces package of enhanced measures from tomorrow

Education is re-introducing its package of enhanced measures from tomorrow (Thursday 17th March 2022) to help alleviate pressures in settings because of the current wave of COVID-19 infections.

These measures have been developed in consultation with Public Health and are designed to support the priority objective of keeping educational schools and settings fully operational and therefore minimising any disruption to young people's education.

While there might be slight variations at each setting depending on their specific circumstances and operational needs, the suite of measures includes:

- All staff (primary, secondary and post-16) are expected to wear a face covering when inside school buildings, including in classrooms.
- All secondary and post-16 students are expected to wear a face covering on school transport and when inside school buildings, including in classrooms. Additional outside breaks will be worked into the school day.
- Primary school-aged students should be supported to wear a face covering if they want to do so.
- Schools may implement changes to drop-off and pick-up times to stagger the number of people on-site at any one time.
- Classroom bubbles will be re-introduced for primary schools where possible.
- Classroom bubbles will be introduced for KS3 (secondary school years 7-9) where possible.
- No school-run extra-curricular clubs or activities will take place for the time being.
- No whole-school assemblies or in-person events such as parents evenings (these will be held online where possible).

Schools will contact parents and carers to provide further information relevant to the implementation of these measures at their child's school.

Nick Hynes, Director of Education, said:

'This is undoubtedly a challenging time for education settings, which is also being experienced by other essential services and private companies, due to the number of

positive cases at the moment. A number of our schools and settings currently have staffing concerns and we all remain focused on managing disruption as a result of absences while maintaining our absolute focus of keeping settings open and delivering education.

‘This package of enhanced measures will be familiar to our staff, students and parents and carers as we are not introducing anything now that hasn’t been in place before. When we have had to revert to these enhanced measures previously, it has served us well so I’m hopeful that they can do so again as long as we continue to have the support of all involved in the delivery of education. I am sure that will be the case so I again take this opportunity to thank all staff and the community in advance for working with us to ensure these measures have the desired impact.’

Ends