

Advice to schools on reopening to more pupils

Summary

Lancashire County Council is advising schools in the county not to open to more pupils from 1 June, but instead to continue with the current arrangements. This is because, in our assessment, we do not currently meet all five of the government's tests in Lancashire which would allow this decision to be taken safely.

We will regularly review the situation and provide further advice so that we can advise schools to open to more pupils as soon as we judge it safe to do so.

We are actively encouraging schools to follow this advice.

Government advice for schools and parents

The government has released the following direction under scientific guidance regarding the re-opening of schools on 1 June:

- Nurseries and other early year providers, including childminders, are to begin welcoming back all children.
- Primary schools are to welcome back children in nursery (where they have them), reception, year 1 and year 6.
- Secondary schools, sixth form, and further education colleges are to begin some face to face support with year 10 and 12 pupils. We do not expect these pupils to return on a full-time basis at this stage.

Local assessment

The government's five tests are outlined below:

- Protect the NHS's ability to cope. We must be confident that we are able to provide sufficient critical care and specialist treatment right across the UK.
- See a sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rates from Covid-19 so we are confident that we have moved beyond the peak
- See that the rate of infection is decreasing to manageable **levels** across the board, although we don't see the results of all tests in a timely manner. In addition, we are starting to see social distancing not being followed everywhere across the county which poses the risk of new cases to rise.
- Be confident that the range of operational challenges, including testing capacity and PPE, are in hand, with supply able to meet future demand.
- Be confident that any adjustments to the current measures will not risk a second peak of infections that overwhelms the NHS.

Locally, we are currently able to meet the requirements of the first three tests; however, we do not meet the requirements for the final two tests. The test and trace programme is not at a state of readiness to respond to Covid-19 community setting outbreaks in a timely manner, which poses a risk to school environments.