

Letter from Wakefield Council: -

Date: 04 January 2022

Dear Head Teacher

Re: COVID-19 advice for the new term.

This letter is to give schools some information about the current situation, and our refreshed local advice.

Current situation

Unfortunately, the arrival of the Omicron variant has led to incredibly high case rates nationally, which have reached Wakefield over the Christmas holidays. Our current case rate is around 1,727 per 100,000 testing positive for COVID-19. We anticipate that these numbers will rise over the coming weeks.

There is increasing evidence that probably due to a mixture of high vaccine coverage and the characteristics of the variant itself, Omicron infection is less likely to lead to very severe illness and ICU admission. However, we are still seeing sharp increases in hospital admissions locally, and very high levels of staff sickness. This is putting enormous pressure on health, social care and other key local services.

Unfortunately, this does mean that on return to school, our children and young people are at higher risk of large numbers of Omicron infections.

We are expecting, as I am sure are you, a significant wave of Omicron infections in schools with the resulting pressure of staff shortages and disruption to children's education. We are grateful for all you have done so far, and hope that as a local authority we can support all our children, families and schools to navigate this difficult period and continue to educate our children and young people as effectively as possible.

Kind regards,

Anna Hartley - Director of Public Health

Vicky Schofield - Acting Director of Children and Young People's Services