##### Argyll and Bute Council





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Letter to Parents/Guardians/Carers

OMICRON UPDATE FOR PARENTS

Local Authorities have today received an update from Public Health Scotland surrounding the Omicron variant of Covid 19 and we would like to share some of the information within that update with parents to keep you in the loop.

**INFORMATION FROM PUBLIC HEALTH**

*To date, the Omicron variant appears to be more transmissible than Delta. Evidence on severity is still being gathered and assessed. The effectiveness of vaccination to protect against severe disease is not yet known, but the booster is expected to provide protection.*

*Robust efforts to slow transmission are being undertaken while we learn more. Therefore, local Health Protection Teams are contacting cases and close contacts by phone and SMS to advise individuals linked to known or suspected Omicron cases that more stringent self-isolation measures than for Delta are being applied.*

*Public Health will contact schools to support case finding and risk assessment and therefore schools must be in a position to respond to their contact tracing requests. In some cases the contact tracing may necessitate whole classes to isolate for 10 days if close contacts cannot be identified.*

*At the moment any Omicron case or contact identified by Test and Protect or the local NHS Health Protection Team must self-isolate for 10 days. This applies to everyone, irrespective of age, and the self-isolation period cannot be reduced by testing negative or being vaccinated.*

*There may be occasions, following risk assessment, where secondary Omicron contacts (contacts of contacts) may be asked to self-isolate and get tested. This would usually involve households of contacts, and they (the secondary contacts) would no longer need to isolate if they are negative on PCR test.*

*If a case is suspected of being infected with the dominant Delta variant, isolation guidance remains unchanged (NHS Inform). However, in the infrequent occasions when there is a mixed variant picture within a setting, a risk assessment may lead to a more precautionary approach where all contacts are advised to isolate for 10 days.*

*We appreciate that this will cause families significant concern particularly in the run up to the festive period but the advice from Public Health is as follows:*

* *Getting vaccinated (whether your first two doses, or your booster when you are eligible) – this is the single most important thing you can do.*
* *Testing regularly using LFDs*
* *Use of face coverings, hand hygiene and social distancing where possible*

*Anyone who has any of the 3 main symptoms of COVID-19:*

* *Recent onset of a new continuous cough*
* *A high temperature*
* *A loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell.*

*Anyone contacted by Test and Protect or public health teams should please co-operate and follow their advice.*

Thank you for your continued support and understanding in these changing times.

Yours sincerely

