

## London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

**Report to:** Children's Policy & Accountability Committee

**Date:** 22/9/2020

**Subject:** Update on sKIDS study – Covid in schools (PHE)

**Report of:** Dr Nicola Lang, Director of Public Health

**Responsible Director:** Jacqui McShannon, Director of Children's Services

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### Summary

In June, five of Hammersmith and Fulham's primary schools were offered the opportunity to take part in a national surveillance study from Public Health England (PHE) called the sKIDS study. The schools were selected if they had more than 75% of children of Black and Minority Ethnicity, as they are often underrepresented in research.

### Recommendations

'For the Committee to note and comment on the report'.

**Wards Affected:** all

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### H&F Values

Please state how the subject of the report relates to our values – delete those values which are not appropriate

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Doing things with local residents, not to them</li></ul>	Working with children from BME backgrounds and their families

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### Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None

## DETAILED ANALYSIS

1. PHE recruited 138 schools across England, including 89 schools that are participating in the weekly swab study and 47 schools having swabs and blood tests done at the beginning and at the end of the summer term.
2. Hammersmith and Fulham primaries (Avonmore, Normand Croft, St Mary's, Addison and Melcombe) participated in the latter model - with a combination of swabs and antibody tests done at the start and end of the Summer term of 2020, and a repeat in October. All primary schools in H&F had negative swab tests to date. There has been a slight wait for the antibody test results, but they have now been shared.
3. The key findings of the national sKIDS study are found here:
4. **“Background** There are limited data on SARS-CoV-2 infection and transmission in educational settings. This information is critical for policy makers and practitioners to ensure the safety of staff, students and the wider community during the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. **Methods** Public Health England initiated enhanced national surveillance following the reopening of educational settings during the summer mini-term on 01 June 2020. COVID-19 related situations in educational settings across England were reviewed daily and followed-up until 31 July 2020. SARS-CoV-2 infection and outbreak rates were calculated for staff and students attending early year settings, primary and secondary schools during June 2020.
6. **Findings** There were 67 single confirmed cases, 4 co-primary cases and 30 COVID-19 outbreaks during June 2020, with a strong correlation between number of outbreaks and regional COVID-19 incidence (0.51 outbreaks for each SARS-CoV-2 infection per 100,000 in the community;  $p=0.001$ ). Overall, SARS-CoV-2 infections and outbreaks were uncommon across all educational settings. Staff members had an increased risk of SARS-CoV-2 infections compared to students in any educational setting, and the majority of cases linked to outbreaks were in staff. The probable transmission direction for the 30 confirmed outbreaks was: staff-to-staff ( $n=15$ ), staff-to-student ( $n=7$ ), student-to-staff ( $n=6$ ) and student-to-student ( $n=2$ ).
7. **Interpretation** SARS-CoV-2 infections and outbreaks were uncommon in educational settings during the first month after the easing of national lockdown in England. The strong correlation with regional SARS-CoV-2 incidence emphasises the importance of controlling community transmission to protect educational settings. Additional interventions should focus on reducing transmission in and among staff members”.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/911267/School\\_Outbreaks\\_Analysis.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/911267/School_Outbreaks_Analysis.pdf)

8. Participating in this national study has anecdotally been positive for parents, with one school noting a definite increase in children's attendance in June due to the study taking place.

Our secondary schools have now been offered the chance to participate in SKIDS plus – we await the outcome from Headteachers.

9. The results from the national work have also informed our approach to '**back to school**' in **Hammersmith and Fulham**, with positive information for parents, Head teachers and social workers.

<https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/articles/news/2020/09/returning-school-safely-hammersmith-fulham>