

Association of Directors of Public Health London (ADPHL) position statement on reopening of primary schools



ADPH London

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The national announcement on the 30th of December limiting opening of primary schools to help prevent the spread of coronavirus has only been applied to 23 London Boroughs.

Eight London boroughs and the City of London have not been directed to keep primary schools closed for the next two weeks, despite high case rates and high percentage changes in case rates, with little to distinguish them from neighbouring boroughs where schools will remain closed.

ADPH London's professional advice is that in the context of the current pandemic situation, this measure should be applied to London as a whole for two principal reasons.

Firstly, many primary school children will be going to schools outside their borough and may travel from boroughs with even higher infection rates, where schools are closed, to attend school in neighbouring areas, potentially spreading infection as they do.

Secondly, the data on which the decisions to include or exclude boroughs is subject to significant change from day to day meaning that differences in actual infection rates between boroughs may be smaller or larger than they appear.

We, therefore, advocate that the principle to delay the reopening of primary schools should apply to all boroughs across London at the same time, if the measure is to have the impact of limiting transmission across London and keeping staff, children and our communities safe.”

Reference:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/948580/Contingency_framework_implementation_guidance.pdf