

London Borough of Havering
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Parent / Carer

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Date: September 2020

Coronavirus (Covid-19)

I hope you and your family are safe and well at this difficult time. Many of you continue to face significant challenges, and I thank you for your continued support to the national response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our head teachers and school staff have worked very hard to ensure that children could return to school this month, and it remains vital for all children to be in school to help minimise the longer-term impact of the pandemic on their education, wellbeing and wider development.

However, you will have seen the worrying news that cases of Covid-19 have been increasing locally, so it has never been more important that you do your bit in reducing the risk of transmitting the virus.

Please adhere to any new processes that your school has put in place, as these have been introduced to ensure the safety of your child, the staff, and the wider community.

Parents are also reminded to set an example to their children by following social distance rules and wearing a face covering at the school gates, unless you have good reason not to.

Since the return to school, we have seen a very small number of schools affected by positive cases of Covid-19. This has meant in some instances, a class or a year group bubble being sent home and asked to self-isolate for 14 days. Before re-opening, we worked with schools to ensure they had measures in place so they could manage any cases in the best possible way, to reduce disruption for the whole school. These measures are now coming into action.

If someone at your child's school tests positive for Covid-19, the local authority, Department for Education, and Public Health England will work with your child's school to risk assess who else should be advised to self-isolate. Children and adults should only get tested if they have symptoms. School lessons for the rest of the pupils will continue as normal.

We know that as a parent you will want peace of mind if your child's class or bubble has been sent home, but please only book a test if your child has symptoms. At the moment, we have been told there is a shortage of laboratory capacity, which means Covid-19 tests need to be prioritised for people with symptoms. If you book a test without symptoms, you will be taking a slot from someone who is more likely to have the virus.

If your child does have symptoms, has a test and it shows as positive, they and their household will be required to self-isolate and you will be contacted by the NHS test and trace system team to find out who else they have been in recent close contact with. If a pupil (including your child) or staff member has been in close contact with a person who has Covid-19, they will need to self-isolate for 14 days to help prevent the virus spreading further – the rest of the household does not need to isolate unless someone develops symptoms. If your child is sent home, they will continue with their studies remotely - if they are able to do so.

If your child or anyone in your household has symptoms of Covid-19 (a temperature, a new continuous cough or loss of/change to taste or smell), do not send your child to school. Contact the school and order a test for whoever has symptoms as soon as possible. To order a test, please call NHS 119 or book online at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

If a child or member of staff develops symptoms at school, they will be sent home with advice about what to do. Anyone who has symptoms or has tested positive will need to self-isolate for at least 10 days, and the rest of the household for 14 days, in line with the latest stay at home guidance.

If the test results are negative, your household can usually leave self-isolation and your child can return to school when they no longer are unwell, assuming they haven't been traced as a close contact of someone who has tested positive, in which case they will still need to wait out the remainder of the 14 day isolation period. A negative test is not required to return back to school at the end of the 14 day isolation period. Only request a test if you or your child develops symptoms.

You can view an online information session and frequently asked questions document via.

<https://familyserviceshub.havering.gov.uk/kb5/havering/directory/advice.page?id=nLkHh2G4qk0>

We all need to follow the government's advice to reduce the risk of further increases in Covid-19 infections locally as a local outbreak may result in full or partial school closures at short notice. I assure you that our schools will offer a safe environment, and the health and safety of children, their families and staff remains everyone's first priority during this period.

Thank you for your continued co-operation at this time.

Kind regards,



CIr Robert Benham
Deputy Leader of the Council
Cabinet Member for Education,
Children & Families



Mark Ansell
Director of Public Health

