

Dear Parent/Carer,

Back to school – what you need to know

Welcome to the new school year. This letter gives important advice about COVID-19 as schools open after the summer holidays.

School teachers and staff have worked hard to make sure that education can look and feel a bit more normal as term starts. Being in school remains vital for all children to make sure their education, wellbeing and wider development continues.

Most children will see far fewer COVID-19 rules to follow than in July, but COVID-19 hasn't gone away. Schools, staff, pupils and visitors will need to continue to follow some important rules to avoid the spread of the virus:

1. Test for COVID-19 at home twice a week. This will reduce the risk of the virus spreading in schools or at home.
2. Wash your hands often and use tissues to “catch it, bin it, kill it” for coughs and sneezes.
3. Follow our advice on testing and what happens if you think you or someone close to you might have COVID-19.

Schools will be maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes, and will keep fresh air flowing in rooms where people are by opening windows.

To keep COVID-19 under control, schools may still need people to follow some more advice. If this happens your school will tell you what is changing and how this affects you and your family.

What if there are a lot of cases in one school?

If there are lots of cases in one school, teachers and staff know what to do and how to help pupils and their families keep safe. Schools will do everything they can to keep education as normal as possible.

More COVID-19 testing or making face coverings a rule again could be brought back if we see lots of cases in one school. If the number of cases keeps increasing, schools may need to change the number of pupils able to come to school. This would only be for a short period of time and online learning will be available if this happens.

What if someone tests positive or has symptoms?

You should self-isolate straight away and get a [PCR test \(a test that is sent to the lab\) on GOV.UK](#) as soon as possible if:

- You have a high temperature.
- You have a new, continuous cough.
- You have lost or reduced sense of smell or taste.

You should also self-isolate straight away if:

- You have tested positive for COVID-19 either through a PCR or LFD test. This means that you have the virus.
- If you get a positive LFD test you should book a PCR test. A negative PCR test means you do not have COVID-19, even if you have had a positive LFD test.
- Someone you live with has COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive (unless you do not have to self-isolate – see below if this applies to you).
- You have been told to self-isolate after you have been close to someone who tested positive – [find out what to do if you're told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app](#).

Pupils should only self-isolate if they have symptoms or test positive in a PCR or Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test.

If your children have symptoms or have a positive LFD test, they should book a PCR test.

If they are asked to get a PCR test because they may have been close to someone else who has tested positive, pupils may continue to come to school until they get the result of their test.

What will happen for people who have been in contact with positive cases?

Not everybody who has been in contact with positive COVID-19 cases will need to self-isolate. [You can find more help on how to do this from NHS Test and Trace](#).

You do not have to self-isolate if you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, **and** any of the following apply:

- You have had both COVID-19 vaccination jabs.
- You are aged under 18 years 6 months.
- You were or are part of a COVID-19 vaccine trial.
- You have medical reasons which mean you cannot be vaccinated.

If this is the case, NHS Test and Trace will contact you. You will be told you have been in close contact with a positive case and asked to take a PCR test. You do not need to isolate while you wait to take the PCR test. If you are told to take a PCR test it is very important to do it.

This autumn term schools will look and feel much more like they did before COVID-19. But it is still very important that we help each other to stay safe.

Thank you for your help,



Mark Ansell

Director of Public Health

“We’re doing our bit for Havering”