

To: Parents and Carers

Date: 04 March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you to you and your families for following the government guidance about COVID-19. We know this most recent lockdown has been a very difficult time and that homeschooling has brought many challenges.

Your actions really do make a difference. We are pleased to say that COVID-19 cases in Brighton & Hove have now come down considerably.

Attending early education and childcare, school and college is really important for our children's learning, social skills and wellbeing. We welcome the government's announcement that all children can return to their educational settings from Monday 8 March.

We are writing to remind you of the important role you play in helping our schools and nurseries to remain open. It is vitally important that you and your family continue to follow COVID-19 guidance so the measures that settings have put in place are as effective as possible.

You can find more information here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Symptom-free testing using lateral flow devices (LFDs)

People can have COVID-19 without realising it.

Symptom free, or 'asymptomatic' testing helps to rapidly identify people who have COVID-19 but have no symptoms who could be passing it on to others without knowing.

Alongside vaccinations, symptom-free testing is an important addition to the fight against the pandemic which will help us return to a future that is more familiar.

Please note that LFD tests can miss some cases of COVID-19. So even if your child, you or someone in your household tests negative, it is very important they continue to take all the usual measures: hands, face and space.

If your secondary-aged child is asked to take part in regular symptom-free testing using rapid lateral flow devices (LFDs) please encourage them to do so.

Your child will first be offered three tests on the school site and then given regular packs to carry out the test at home. Your child doesn't have to be tested in order to return to school. But regular testing can stop people spreading the virus without realising it.

Primary school children do not need to be tested

Regular symptom-free testing is now available for households, childcare and support bubbles of primary and secondary-age pupils.

Everyone in these groups is recommended to get tested twice a week using rapid LFD tests. Please go to this council web page for details on how to access the symptom-free testing. <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/covidschools>. This site will be updated regularly.

Face coverings

Please ensure your child uses face coverings safely when your school or college asks them to wear one.

Secondary school pupils in year 7 and above should wear face coverings when moving around school premises and in classrooms or during activities as directed by the school, unless they are exempt.

It is important for pupils to wash their hands after removing their face covering. They should store it in a resealable plastic bag or container. Face coverings that are close fitting on the nose and mouth and are made from two or three layers of fabric are more effective.

Travel to and from school or nursery by bike or on foot where possible

Travelling on foot or by bike is the safest way to avoid catching or spreading COVID-19.

Whatever method of transport your child uses, encourage them to avoid travelling or walking in groups. If you travel with your child, take care to maintain social distancing at drop-off and pick-up times.

The council has worked with schools and Brighton & Hove Buses to increase bus capacity.

If your child needs to travel to school by bus and is 11 years or over, they have to wear a face covering – unless they are exempt.

More information (including how to make your own) is here
<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education>

Avoid travelling in cars with other households if at all possible

If you have to travel with people outside your household group, try to share the transport with the same people each time. Keep the windows open, wear a face covering, keep some distance wherever possible and clean the vehicle between journeys.

Please minimise contact with people outside your household

Staying overnight (including sleepovers) and indoor gatherings (including children's parties) are not allowed. Please also talk to your child about the importance of not gathering in groups and maintaining distancing even when outdoors.

You can find more information here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing

Handwashing

This is still really important. Please make sure it's the last thing you and your child do before leaving the house, and the first thing when you get home.

You can find information here:

www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands

Keeping your child or young person at home and self-isolating

You should only do this if:

- they are showing COVID-19 symptoms
- if someone in their household is showing symptoms or
- if they have been asked to self-isolate by the educational setting or NHS test and trace.

If you or any member of your household develop COVID-19 symptoms you should self-isolate immediately and book a test at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or phone 119

The symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

Even if you have recently had a negative LFD test, you will still need to self-isolate if you develop symptoms.

All other members of your household will also need to stay home and self-isolate.

You can arrange a test by booking one at a local testing site or requesting a home test kit. Find out more or book a test at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus

It's important that you tell your nursery, childminder, school, or college the results of any tests you have.

If your child's school, nursery or childminder says your child should self-isolate, please make sure they do so.

If you have any questions about your child's return to childcare or education please contact your childcare provider, school, or college.

Find out more at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak

Many thanks for taking the time to read this letter.

Wishing you a happy and healthy new term.

Your sincerely



Alistair Hill
Director of Public Health



Deb Austin
Executive Director, Families, Children & Learning