

Date 18 September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

This is a follow-up letter from the last one I sent recently as several things have changed since I sent it. This letter highlights the recent updates on managing confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community. Not all of it relates directly to parents and carers but is nonetheless it could be useful for you to be aware of.

Here's the [link](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#main-changes-since-this-guidance-was-last-updated) to the updated guidance for full opening for schools
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#main-changes-since-this-guidance-was-last-updated>

The following key information has been updated:

- **The framework for supporting transport to and from schools**
 - Pupils on dedicated school services do not mix with the general public on those journeys and pupil groups will tend to be consistent under return to school measures. Therefore, wider transmission risks are likely to be lower.
 - ✓ In accordance with advice from PHE, from the autumn term, local authorities should advise children and young people aged 11 and over to wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated transport. This does not apply to people who are exempt from wearing a face covering on public transport. More information on this can be found at the [safer travel guidance for passengers](#).
- **Use of face coverings in schools**
 - Universal use of face coverings is not recommended in all schools. Schools that teach children in years 7 and above and which are not under specific local restriction measures will have the discretion to require face coverings for pupils, staff and visitors in areas outside the classroom where social distancing cannot easily be maintained, such as corridors and communal areas and it has been deemed appropriate in those circumstances. Primary school children will not need to wear a face covering.
 - In areas where local lockdowns or restrictions are in place, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils (in years 7 and above) in areas outside classrooms when moving around communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain such as corridors. This is not relevant at the present time in this area.
- **Actions for all schools and local authorities with regards to recording attendance and absence**
 - School attendance is mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:
 - ✓ parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age
 - ✓ schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
 - ✓ the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- **Physical activity in schools**
 - Outdoor sports should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not, maximising natural ventilation flows (through opening windows and doors or using air conditioning systems wherever possible) distancing between pupils and paying attention to cleaning and hygiene. This is particularly important in a sports setting because of the way in which people breathe during exercise. External facilities can also be used in line with government guidance for the use of, and travel to and from, those facilities
- **changes to SEND legislation**

- The temporary changes to the law on the timescales for EHC needs assessments and plans, which give local authorities and others who contribute to the relevant processes more flexibility in responding to the demands placed on them by coronavirus (COVID-19), will expire as planned on 25 September 2020. Further information on the temporary changes to the law on EHC needs assessment and plan processes is available at [changes to the law on education, health and care needs assessments and plans due to coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Covid19 symptoms:

Anyone experiencing one or more of the symptoms outlined below should follow the government's guidance on self-isolation and access a coronavirus test within 3 to 5 days of onset of symptoms either via the NHS online portal or by dialling 119. If the test is negative the child and the family can stop isolating and return to school/ work if they feel well enough.

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

We appreciate the ongoing difficulty in securing testing appointments. If you can't immediately get a test appointment, please persist, new tests become available regularly.

Diarrhoea/ vomiting in children during this season is most commonly associated with viral gastroenteritis, though it may also be a minor symptom of Covid-19. However, at this point diarrhoea/ vomiting is not included in the symptoms which are required to obtain a test for Covid-19. If a child has symptoms of diarrhoea/ vomiting they must be excluded from school immediately for a duration till 48 hrs after their symptoms resolve.

Cold symptoms:

Your child may come to school and will not be sent home with: one of the following:

- a blocked or runny nose
- a sore throat
- headache

We continue to ask students to practise safe social distancing and hand hygiene. We also ask that they wear face coverings for the entire journey if they are travelling to school by bus (see details above in transport and use of face coverings).

We thank you for your continued support of the schools and the steps we are taking to strike a balance between safety and education.

Yours faithfully,



Dr Anjan Ghosh
Director of Public Health
London Borough of Bexley