

Dear Haringey Parents, Carers and Guardians,

During the past few weeks, we have seen an increase of COVID-19 cases across all of our age groups in Haringey – including our children and young people. With the school holidays now upon us, I want to remind you that we must all play our part to protect our loved ones and the community. Our local schools and childcare settings have done a great job in protecting children and staff these past few months, and it is important we all keep following the rules over the holiday period so that children, students and staff can return safely to them in the New Year.

What can you do to help keep the community safe?

The past few months have been very hard on all of us, but especially for young people. I know that many of you were looking forward to meeting up with friends and family during the holiday, but – with London moving into Tier 4 on Sunday – Christmas bubbles and household mixing* (*aside from support bubbles) are now no longer allowed. Mixing socially carries a risk and, the more people we mix with, the greater the risk. Please remember to only meet with one other person in public outdoor spaces, and you must not leave – or be outside of your home – except for specific purposes. For further information, see the Tier 4: Stay at Home guidance on the Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tier-4-stay-at-home#stay-at-home>

I would urge you to be extra careful during the holidays and continue to wash your hands, ensure social distancing, and wear a face covering when in an indoor public setting. This will not only continue to keep our elderly and vulnerable population safe, but help limit the spread of the virus overall.

But most importantly of all, if your child shows any sign of COVID-19 over the holidays or when schools reopen, make sure they get a test immediately and keep them at home, along with the rest of your household, until you know the result. A test can be booked online via the NHS portal: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by phoning 119.

If you are not sure whether your child should be in school or childcare, please check with NHS 111 before dropping them off.

Should your child receive a COVID-19 test?

Any child showing one of the three main COVID-19 symptoms (see below) should book a test immediately online via the NHS portal <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by phoning 119. Children with one or more of the COVID-19 symptoms who do not receive a test, will need to self-isolate for 10 days regardless of whether they feel better after a few days.

If a child in the house is unwell with COVID-19 symptoms, the whole household has to go into self-isolation immediately and wait for the child's test result to come back. It is important that the entire household stays at home and does not see anyone from outside the home while they wait for the result, as this will prevent the virus from spreading to other people.

What to do when the test result comes back?

If the test is negative, the child can return to their school or childcare setting when they feel well enough, and their household/s can stop self-isolation immediately.

If the test is positive, the child should continue to complete their 10-day self-isolation. Household members will also need to continue to self-isolate for 10 days. The reason the isolation period is 10 days for those within the home, is because that is how long it can take for symptoms to develop, and if you socialise with others during this time you could unknowingly pass the virus on. Family members living with someone who is positive with COVID-19 do not need to get tested unless they also become unwell.

The three main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- High temperature – this means a temperature of 37.8 degrees or above.
- Loss or change to sense of smell/taste
- New, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing fits in 24 hours (a usual cough may be worse than normal)

Most people will have at least one of these symptoms and children only tend to get mild symptoms.

Testing is currently only recommended if you develop any of the COVID-19 symptoms.

I kindly ask that you help your child's school or childcare setting by following the guidelines and advice within this letter. By doing so, our schools and childcare settings can continue to keep your child, and their staff, as safe as possible.

Thank you for all your fantastic support and co-operation thus far. Wishing you all a happy holiday.

Best,



Dr Will Maimaris

Director of Haringey Public Health