



Dear Parent/Carer

As we approach the end of the third week back following the summer holidays, we are delighted to see so many of our children and young people returning to schools and settings. We all know how important it is for children to experience some normality after the unique circumstances we have all been experiencing over the last 6 months. Our schools have been working really hard to make sure that they minimise the risks of transmission of the virus to children, staff and the wider community by establishing specific groups of children, either in a class or year group, into “bubbles”.

Despite our best efforts we have seen a small number of schools and settings having to close down bubbles over the last two weeks due to the identification of a child or staff member as a confirmed COVID-19 case. This results in schools having to request children within that bubble to self-isolate. Schools do send standard letters to parents explaining what this isolation means.

For the sake of clarity we would like to set out how you and your family can help to prevent passing the virus on. These are the steps that you must take:

Child with COVID-19 Symptoms

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19 please **do not** send them to school. Please keep them at home and arrange for them to be tested. Symptoms are:

- A high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- 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.

Child asked to self-isolate

If your child has been asked to self-isolate, due to being a confirmed case of COVID-19 or being a school contact of a confirmed case, please take the following action:

- Your child must **stay at home**
- Your child **must not** go to school, public areas, shops, clubs or out of school settings and do not use public transport or taxis.
- Your child **must not** meet friends during a 14 day period
- Any exercise should be taken within your home.

Child develops COVID-19 Symptoms during period of self-isolation

If during the period of isolation your child experiences symptoms of COVID-19, please take the following action:

- Arrange a COVID-19 test for your child as soon as possible
- Once you have the test result you must inform your child's school or setting along with any clubs or out of school settings your child attends.

It is really important you support your child to follow this guidance in order to keep our community safe and reduce the risk of transmission.

Of course, if at any time your child becomes more unwell or their symptoms worsen, do seek medical advice straightaway.

Accessing Testing

You can register online or call 119, to book a test or to arrange a home test to be sent out to you.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

We do appreciate there are current issues with accessing testing and these are nationwide. Our Council website is regularly updated with the current situation for our local area and information and options can be found on the following link <https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/get-a-test>

The Public Health guidance advises that if you are struggling to get a test on the system, please try again in a couple of hours. *Please do not visit your GP or A&E to access a test*

If you do have any questions, please do check our Council website <https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/coronavirus/schools-covid-19-information> or contact your child's school in the first instance. In addition, effective from 17 September 2020, The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline is available to answer questions about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education and children's social care. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline by calling: Phone: 0800 046 8687. Opening hours: Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 4pm.

Many Thanks for supporting our wider Blackburn with Darwen community.

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