

Our ref:

Your ref:

Date: 23rd March 2021

Email: [KrishnaRamkhelawon@southend.gov.uk](mailto:KrishnaRamkhelawon@southend.gov.uk)

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **Covid-19 testing and the Easter holiday**

As Director of Public Health for Southend-on-Sea, I want to personally thank you for your support and cooperation with the return to school on Monday 8 March. Thanks to you and efforts of the schools, 94% of pupils returned to the classroom that week, the first step of easing national Covid-19 restrictions.

The second stage of the roadmap is now fast approaching and from Monday 29 March, the first day of the school Easter holidays, there is a further slight relaxation of restrictions as the rule of six or two households comes into effect.

While this is exciting and we all want to return to normal, we do not want the number of cases to rise again locally. I urge you to stick to the national guidance and encourage you to keep up the good work and help Southend-on-Sea with a safe step out of lockdown.

Testing is important because one in three people are asymptomatic, meaning they don't have the known Covid-19 symptoms of a temperature, a new continuous cough or a loss of taste or smell. Getting tested when you don't have symptoms gives some reassurance that you are not unknowingly spreading the virus, and the more you get tested the more reassured you can be.

As more families mix under the rule of six from 29 March, it is more important than ever to keep everyone safe and protect the wider community. Please continue to get tested regularly. Details of how to access a test are below.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation and enjoy the Easter break.

Yours faithfully



Krishna Ramkhelawon  
Director of Public Health  
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

## Book a test at one of our rapid test sites.

You can book a test at [www.southend.gov.uk/gettested](http://www.southend.gov.uk/gettested). There are sites and venues across the Borough where you can book a test or at some sites, just turn up.

Please **do not** attend a test at the rapid LFD sites if:

- You have any symptoms of Covid-19 (a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)
- You have had a positive test (LFD or PCR) in the last 90 days
- You have been in contact with anyone in the last 10 days who has symptoms or tested positive

Instead book a PCR test at [www.southend.gov.uk/gettested](http://www.southend.gov.uk/gettested) and continue to self-isolate until you receive the results.

## Changes to the Test and Trace support payment for parents

Parents and carers of children who have been advised to self-isolate by their education setting or by NHS Test and Trace are now able to apply for a [Test and Trace Support Payment](#) or discretionary payment of £500, if they meet the eligibility criteria.

Find out more at the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council website: [www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk) and type in the search bar, '[Coronavirus financial support](#)'.

## Vaccination

If you have any concerns about the COVID vaccine, please call your GP to discuss this. You can also contact our Coronavirus Action Helpline on: 01702 212497.

## Face coverings

Research has shown that face coverings, when worn correctly over the mouth and nose, play a significant role in reducing the spread of virus' such as Covid-19. The most successful thing that we have all contributed is to continue to adopt the hand-face-space motto.

The DfE is also now also recommending that face coverings are worn by secondary-age pupils in classrooms, only where social distancing cannot be maintained and unless a young person is medically exempt from wearing one. Secondary and college pupils are already required to wear a face covering when moving around school buildings in corridors and communal areas, as well as when travelling to and from school on public transport.

Parents are also asked to wear a face covering, unless they are exempt, when dropping off and picking up their children from an education setting, including school, nursery and childminders.

Keep Southend Safe.

