

Our ref:

Your ref:

Date: 12th April 2021

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Dear parents and carers,

Firstly, welcome back from the Easter break. I hope you were able to enjoy some rest and time with friends and family.

I wanted to update you on some developments with the national testing regime for Covid-19.

Reintroduction of confirmatory PCR

- Following January's temporary suspension, Public Health England (PHE) has decided to reintroduce routine confirmatory PCR tests following all positive rapid flow tests (LFD) results, regardless of whether the test is taken at a testing centre or at home. The test is carried out exactly the same, but the way the results are analysed is different.
- **This change started from 30 March 2021.**
- The reintroduction of confirmatory PCR will hopefully reduce the number of people self-isolating unnecessarily, and enable the sequencing of positive PCR samples of the virus to identify any new variants.
- For LFDs undertaken under supervised conditions, a positive LFD result will trigger the legal duty to self-isolate and initiate contact tracing. If a negative confirmatory PCR is obtained **within 2 days** of the positive LFD test result, the individual will be released from self-isolation and tracing. If the confirmatory PCR test is taken too late, the individual who got a positive LFD (**and their household**) will need to self-isolate for the full 10 days.
- For LFDs undertaken at home, the legal obligation will only commence once a positive PCR test is confirmed but anyone who has received a positive LFD result should still self-isolate (along with members of their household) as soon as they get the positive LFD.
- You can now also get a PCR test if you have come into contact with someone with Covid-19, even if you do not have symptoms.
- Read more at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-reintroduces-confirmatory-pcr-testing>

Community collect/home testing

As of 9 April everyone is eligible for twice weekly symptom-free LFD testing kits. If you don't already receive tests through your child's school or your workplace, kits can be collected at community LFD rapid testing sites located at:

- University Square building, London Road, Southend-on-Sea
- Belfairs Methodist Church, Eastwood Rd North, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 4NG.
- Shoebury Youth Centre, Delaware Road, Shoeburyness, SS3 9NS.

You do not need to book an appointment to pick up a test kit.

Book a test at one of our rapid test sites

You can book a test [online](#). 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 [online](#) 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 [Coronavirus financial support](#).

Face coverings

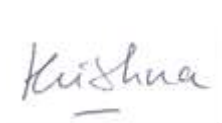
Research has shown that face coverings, when worn correctly over the mouth and nose, play a significant role in reducing the spread of virus' such as Covid-19. The most successful thing that we have all contributed is to continue to adopt the hand-face-space motto. Even if you have received your first dose of vaccine, or are fully vaccinated, you should still keep up with the public health measures such as hands, face, space.

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.

Yours faithfully



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



STAY HOME
PROTECT
THE NHS
SAVE LIVES