

# COVID-19 school communications: key messages, updated safety messages, parent reassurance

## w/c 19 April

### Key messages

- London's schools and students have done a fantastic job adapting to COVID secure measures and working hard to make sure it doesn't impact learning. Getting children back safely this term will minimise the longer-term impact of the pandemic on their education, wellbeing and wider development.
- Lewisham is now in a much stronger position than we were in winter, but the situation remains delicate and while the virus is still spreading in the capital we all still need to follow public health advice.
- When dropping children to school, make sure to keep your distance from other parents. Remember that around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 don't have any symptoms and can still pass it on to other people.
- Rapid testing remains crucial to keep our borough's schools and colleges safe. Regular testing is helping to find and isolate cases, stopping outbreaks before they develop.
- London is on the right track, but we must all help ensure the next step we take is forwards, not back. As children and young people return to school, face coverings will continue for secondary schools along with all other safety measures for all schools such as regular testing, smaller group bubbles and Hands, Face, Space, Fresh Air.
- Regular rapid testing for parents and family of pre-school and primary aged children will help to keep Lewisham's schools safe. Everyone (aged 11+) is eligible for twice-weekly asymptomatic testing to help keep London safe. Free tests are available through employers, schools and universities, as well as from pharmacies and online.

### Updated safety messages

1. **Coronavirus is still spreading in London**, let's make sure the next step we take is forward, not back.
2. The basic measures of **Hands, Face, Space, Fresh Air** are still important to keep London safe.
3. **Wash your hands** regularly and make the most of hand sanitiser stations at buildings and public spaces across the capital if you need to be out.
4. **Always wear a face covering where rules apply**, particularly on public transport in London.
5. **Meet with others outside** if you don't live with them and stay two metres apart where possible. Sticking to the rule of six or two households will allow us to take this next step carefully.

6. **Get fresh air** into your home and workplace and open windows on public transport where possible. Opening windows regularly can help remove air that contains virus particles and prevent the spread of coronavirus.
7. **Get tested regularly** – anyone can get tested for free, symptoms or no symptoms. If you do have symptoms you must still self-isolate immediately and book a test as quickly as possible.
8. **Get your vaccine when it is your turn.**

## Parent reassurance

- The return to school after Easter will allow for further monitoring of the impact of measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19, as we encourage families to test regularly.
- Wearing face coverings in secondary schools is an extra control measure to reduce the risk of transmission to support children continuing their education in the classroom.
- Staff, parents and pupils can feel reassured by existing studies which have consistently shown transmission within schools is low.
- National surveillance data shows that infection rates in school-aged children closely reflect what is happening in the local community.
- Currently there is no evidence that suggests new COVID-19 variants cause more severe illness or worse symptoms in children.
- PHE's [Surveillance in Schools study \(sKIDS\)](#) has showed that transmission in primary schools was extremely low and outbreaks were rare.
- PHE has worked with DfE on the 'system of controls' which reduce contacts and enhance infection prevention measures like hand hygiene and cleaning. The system is revised when new evidence becomes available, for example the importance of good ventilation.