

To: All Parents and Carers

Date: 16 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to thank you for your support to our schools this year. It has been the most difficult of times for everyone and has required schools and families to change plans frequently in response to COVID cases in school. This has not only been complex for schools to manage on a day to day basis but will have often meant it unavoidably impacted on your own arrangements at short notice.

I would also like to recognise the work our schools have done throughout the pandemic. Schools made radical changes to the way in which they operate and had to respond to changing Government guidance on a daily basis. They did this whilst trying to manage COVID-19 cases, class bubbles, staffing availability and remote learning when self-isolation periods impacted on the usual capacity to run a school. As a result, many school staff have been continuously on call, even during school holiday periods, to support track and trace activities or to reorganise the school in response to national guidance changes.

As we now have reached the end of the term there is an expectation from the Government that schools continue to assist with track and trace activities at the start of the holiday period. However, schools will only need to be notified if your child has developed symptoms within the first 2 days after the end of the school term (and then subsequently tested positive). It would be very helpful if your child develops symptoms of COVID within the first 2 days after school closes that you quickly arrange a COVID test. If your child tests positive then please inform the school as soon as possible.

[IL1: PROTECT]

**Chris Ward, Director of Education, Skills and Employment**  
**EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT DIRECTORATE**  
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, The Council House, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE

Please note that if your child develops symptoms AFTER the 2 days following the end of term then you will not need to contact the school during the holiday period if your child tests positive. Instead, book a test quickly and engage with NHS test and trace services directly.

If you or your children do contract COVID over the holiday period, schools will need to know this at the start of the school term. This will ensure that they are able to record your child's absence correctly if they are self-isolating. Your school will tell you the best way to contact them with this information.

Finally, I think we would all agree that 2020 has been a very challenging year for schools, families and our children. I sincerely hope that the holiday period brings you some happiness and joy.

Thank you for your support to our schools this year and let us hope that the New Year sees the start of a return to normality for us all.

Yours sincerely



Chris Ward  
**Director of Education, Skills and Employment**

[IL1: PROTECT]

**Chris Ward, Director of Education, Skills and Employment**  
**EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT DIRECTORATE**  
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, The Council House, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE

Web: [www.sandwell.gov.uk](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk)