

3 March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

## Coronavirus (Covid-19) – March 8<sup>th</sup> Re-opening of Schools

As schools and settings prepare to receive all pupils and students back to face to face provision, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for helping us to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Thurrock by following the government stay at home guidance, this has led to a significant reduction in our local transmission rates.

Our collective priority is to ensure all children, young people and staff are safe, well, able to work and able to learn. Your actions through the recent period of national restrictions have meant that the number of cases of COVID-19 have dropped locally, but it has never been more important that we continue to do our bit in reducing the risk of transmitting the virus. To achieve this we are encouraging;

- All returning primary, secondary and college pupils and staff to get a one-off community or postal Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test prior to returning. Full details on how you can book a test can be found on the Thurrock Council website [www.thurrock.gov.uk/coronavirus-test](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/coronavirus-test).
- If your child is in secondary school, the school will provide your child with three initial school-based Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test which should be taken three to five days apart. Your child's school will also provide your child(ren) with a LFD home test kits to complete twice-weekly testing at home. You should report every home test results via the NHS Test and Trace Programme website <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result> or a call to NHS 119
- Adults with primary and secondary aged children are advised to complete twice-weekly testing using a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) home test kit. You can order a home test kit from the government website <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-test>. Please report the result through this website <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result> or by calling 119. A confirmatory PCR test will be required for positive lateral flow tests which are taken at home, either through at home PCR testing or at a local PCR testing site. Details can be found on the Thurrock Council website [www.thurrock.gov.uk/coronavirus-test](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/coronavirus-test).

By undertaking mass screening of pupils and staff for COVID-19, we hope to be able to isolate all positive cases and significantly reduce the likelihood of new outbreaks in schools in March.

Your child should isolate at home and not come in to school if:

- Your child or a member of your household develops any COVID19 symptom. In this instance you should also access a PCR test straight away, details of how to do this can be found on the Thurrock Council website [www.thurrock.gov.uk/coronavirus-test](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/coronavirus-test)
- Your child has been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID19

### **Hand, Face, Space**

Schools and the Council are doing everything to maintain the reduction in the number of cases locally. We are working hard to minimise chances of COVID-19 being transmitted within the school and we need your help and support to ensure our communities are as safe as they can be by;

- Ensuring you are wearing a face covering while at the school premises for example when you are waiting for your child(ren) to go into school or be collected.
- Face coverings are now recommended to be worn by secondary aged children in the classroom and where social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Ensure you observe 2 metres social distancing whilst waiting for your child(ren) and leaving the school premises as quickly as you can to avoid any large congregation of parents and carers at the school gates.
- If your child(ren) walks home from school independently, encourage them to leave the school as soon as they can and avoid mixing and congregating with other students outside of the school premises.
- Continue to practice hand washing and sanitising.

Thank you for your continued support during these challenging times

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



**Jo Broadbent**  
Interim Director of Public Health



**Sheila Murphy**  
Corporate Director of Children's Services

## Appendix – Links to published Guidance for further information

1. **What parents need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19** - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-covid-19>
2. **Guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19#education-settings>
3. **Coronavirus (COVID-19) asymptomatic testing in schools and colleges** - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-asymptomatic-testing-in-schools-and-colleges/coronavirus-covid-19-asymptomatic-testing-in-schools-and-colleges?priority-taxon=b350e61d-1db9-4cc2-bb44-fab02882ac25>
4. **Testing in Secondary Schools and Colleges - Frequently Asked Questions** - <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1fvleBOc5ijlXA3rTxsciYggxodDhkWGI>
5. **Rapid lateral flow testing for households and bubbles of school pupils and staff** - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff>
6. **Special schools and other specialist settings: coronavirus (COVID-19)** - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>