

Thursday 12th November 2020

Dear parents and carers,

On Thursday 5th November, England entered a second, month-long lockdown in order to slow the spread of COVID-19, with [new national restrictions](#) introduced by central Government.

In order for Essex to come out of lockdown at the earliest opportunity, compliance with the new restrictions is absolutely key.

As you will be aware, schools and colleges are remaining open throughout this period. This has been prioritised by the Government, as it remains important for children and young people to attend, to support their wellbeing and education, as well as to help working parents and guardians.

Childcare and clubs/activities

Early years settings and formal childcare – such as childminders and nannies – can still be accessed as usual. Schools have also been advised that before and after school clubs which are necessary to enable parents to work can also continue. This means that some after school clubs will continue, while others will need to stop temporarily. Schools and colleges will be taking these decisions on a case by case basis and will inform parents as needed.

Informal childcare (defined as unpaid and unregistered childcare) can only be provided in private homes by people in your support bubble or your childcare bubble. A childcare bubble is where someone in one household provides childcare to a child aged 13 or under in one other household. For any given childcare bubble, this must always be between the same two households.

Individuals who are clinically extremely vulnerable

People defined on medical grounds as ‘clinically extremely vulnerable’ are being strongly advised not to attend schools, colleges or childcare settings at this time. This will impact a small number of pupils and staff, all of whom will have received a letter from the Government setting out advice for the new restrictions. If your child or young person has not been deemed clinically extremely vulnerable, but you have concerns about them attending their education setting at this time, please liaise with your GP or usual medical professional.

Self isolation

Anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 must self-isolate and seek a test. People in the same household must also self-isolate until the test result is returned. This includes children remaining at home whilst parents or siblings are awaiting a test result. If the test is negative, the household can end their isolation. You should inform your child’s school or college as soon as possible if they receive a positive COVID-19 test.

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in an education setting, the school or college will seek advice from Essex’s local Test and Trace team. The school or college will then communicate any need for individuals or bubbles of students to self-isolate on behalf of the

Test and Trace team. It is very important that you follow the guidance given by your child's education setting in these circumstances; it may be that your child is asked to self-isolate even though they are well. In this situation members of the wider household will not need to self-isolate unless the child goes on to develop COVID-19 symptoms. It also remains that individuals do not need to be tested unless they are symptomatic.

Schools and colleges are determining the best way for them to provide remote learning for some students, whilst also maintaining onsite provision for others. There is no expectation that live lessons are provided virtually, but schools and colleges are doing their best to provide an offer that enables children and young people to continue with their education. We encourage you to support your children/ young people to engage with the remote learning offer and if you have any issues accessing the resources please speak to your education setting, who will support you.

Protective measures for schools and settings

Education settings have strong measures in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19. These preventative measures include regular handwashing and keeping pupils apart as much as possible, even within their class or year group bubble.

We have also asked all education settings that teach those in Year 7 and above to require students and adults to wear face coverings when moving around indoors, unless the person is exempt from doing so. This requirement applies in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain. In addition, we have advised primary schools and early years settings that it is best practice to ask all visitors to wear face coverings when entering the premises.

As we've mentioned in previous letters, it is crucial that parents and young people maintain a two-metre distance from others at the school gate during drop-off and pick-up time. Maintaining this distance from those outside your household, childcare and support bubble will help to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The current regulation regarding meeting with others outside of your household means you should only meet with one person outside of your household and this should be adhered to during school drop-off and collection periods.

Maintaining measures such as these greatly reduces the risk of COVID-19 being transmitted and is why children and young people can mix with others in their school or college but not with those same people in other situations, such as in private homes, public places or outdoors. We ask again that you continue to adhere to these restrictions because we all have a role to play in reducing the transmission of the virus and ensuring our schools and settings are able to remain open safely.

Thank you for your continued support of the education and childcare staff in Essex.

Yours faithfully,

Clare Kershaw



Director of Education
Essex County Council

Dr Mike Gogarty



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