

Dear parent/carers,

COVID-19 rates are currently the highest they have been both nationally and here in West Sussex since the start of the pandemic.

For those who are still sending their children to pre-school or school, it is therefore more important than ever that we all follow the steps to keep our community, and our families, safe.

As Director of Public Health, I cannot stress enough the importance of us all working together to bring the rates down so we can come out of these highest restrictions as soon as possible. We are aware of the difficulty this is causing families. [Financial advice and practical support is available](#) to help those who have to self-isolate and cannot work. Families who need additional support can contact the West Sussex Community Hub seven days a week on 033 022 27980. Please **do not send your child to school or early years provision** if they:

- Have any **symptoms** related to COVID-19. Common symptoms are a new, continuous cough; a high temperature; a loss or change of smell or taste
- Are **awaiting test results**. Your child must stay at home while they wait for the lab results of an NHS test (for rapid testing see below)
- **Test positive** for COVID-19. Your child must isolate immediately, along with the rest of the household.
- Have been told you or they are a **contact** of someone with COVID-19 and have been asked to self-isolate

If you suspect that anyone in your household has COVID-19, you must get them tested and the rest of the family must self-isolate until you either receive a negative result, or for the time you are asked to isolate. Please inform your child's setting at the earliest opportunity of any positive results or if you or your child are being tested. For other practical issues related to the guidance, I would strongly advise you to speak to your school.

You can [read the full NHS guidance on when to get tested and how to self-isolate](#).

**Community/rapid testing:** You may have seen some announcements about rapid testing of school students (known as Lateral Flow Tests or Lateral Flow Devices). The guidance has changed recently and for the time being, students will **not now be offered daily testing** as an alternative to isolation.

Thank you for following the national guidance on **Hands Face Space** and for continuing to do everything you can to help keep West Sussex safe. You can get the latest information in West Sussex on the [COVID-19 section on our website](#); follow the council's Facebook and Twitter pages where daily rates are shared; and [sign up to the council's weekly resident's e-newsletter](#).

Best wishes

Tony Hill, Interim Director of Public Health