

Parent / Carer

Date: May 2021

Coronavirus (Covid-19) – Roadmap out of lockdown

I hope you and your family are safe and well at this difficult time, and I thank you for your continued support of the national response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our head teachers and school staff have worked very hard to ensure that all children were able to return to school in March. Your actions have meant that the number of cases of Covid-19 continue to drop locally, but it has never been more important that you continue to do your bit in reducing the risk of transmitting the virus.

You will have heard the Prime Minister confirm that the Roadmap is on track, and the planned Step 3 easements will go ahead on 17th May. This means that the majority of the indoor and remaining outdoor economy can reopen, and gathering limits will increase to 6 indoors and up to 30 outdoors with social distancing still in place. Guidance for close contact between friends and family will be updated, with people exercising their own personal judgement in line with the risks.

However, the Prime Minister also continued to urge caution. The aim of the Roadmap is to be cautious but irreversible. Unlocking too fast, too soon, risks a resurgence of the virus.

In line with Step 3 of the Roadmap, schools have been issued with updated guidance. It explains the actions school leaders should take to minimise the risk of transmission of Covid-19 in their school, and includes public health advice, endorsed by Public Health England (PHE).

Not every relaxation we see in wider society will be mirrored exactly in schools. Schools will therefore continue to ensure they have appropriate measures in place to reduce the risk of infection by staff, pupils and visitors according to each school's risk assessment.

The more the virus spreads, the more opportunities there are for the virus to mutate and create new variants. The best way to limit the risk of an outbreak is to get vaccinated when invited to do so, and for pupils in secondary schools and all adults in households where a child is of school age to test twice weekly using a rapid test kit and report the results online. This will identify positive cases early and prevent the spread of the infection. Should there be any positive cases, schools will continue to manage these in the best possible way to reduce disruption for the whole school.

Please continue to adhere to any processes that your school has put in place, as these have been introduced to ensure the safety of your child, the staff, and the wider community. Schools may continue to implement staggered starts, or adjust start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school. Please also set an example to your children by following the current social distancing rules, and wearing a face covering where it is still required, unless you have a medical exemption. You may continue to wear a face covering outside, such as when picking children up from school gates, or where you cannot maintain good social distance. Remember #Hands, Face, Space and Fresh Air.

From 17th May, face coverings will no longer be recommended for pupils in classrooms or communal areas in all schools. However, face coverings should still be worn by staff and visitors outside of classrooms where social distancing cannot be maintained. Should any pupil or staff member choose to continue to wear a face covering, it will offer additional reduction in risk of infection. Children and young people aged 11 and over must still wear a face covering on public transport and in shops.

Schools may also need to continue with restrictions regarding performances and sports days. There will also continue to be noticeable differences in the way different schools implement some of the measures for the remainder of the term, based on their individual circumstances. Schools will continue to thoroughly review their health and safety risk assessments to address the risks identified, and essential measures will include:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have Covid-19 symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school
- clean hands thoroughly and more often than usual
- ensure good respiratory hygiene - the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often
- minimising contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible to reduce the risk of transmission
- where necessary and in specific circumstances, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace

It is expected that twice-weekly testing at home with a rapid test kit and [reporting the results online](#) will become routine for secondary pupils, staff in both primary and secondary schools, and all other adults. In the event of either a positive LFD, or having Covid-19 symptoms, please ensure you follow the [Stay at Home Guidance](#) for isolating yourself and close contacts, and get a confirmatory PCR test.

We are all looking forward to the easing of the current national restrictions, but we must remain careful and follow the government's advice to prevent a local outbreak, which may result in full or partial school closures at short notice. The health and safety of children, their families and staff remains everyone's first priority during this period.

To keep up-to-date with the latest information please visit our website - <https://www.havering.gov.uk/covid19> or you can subscribe to our regular resident bulletin, Living in Havering - <https://www.havering.gov.uk/enews>

Thank you for your continued co-operation at this time.

Kind regards,



Cllr Robert Benham
Deputy Leader of the Council
Cabinet Member for Education,
Children & Families



Mark Ansell
Director of Public Health

