

Coronavirus guidelines for parents and carers

Introduction

We have had great attendance of children in our schools since they re-opened. We want to thank parents for continuing to send their children to school in the autumn term.

We have learned a great deal from yourselves and our colleagues in Public Health about what is working and where we may need to make some alterations.

As we did in September and June, we are asking for your help in keeping schools as safe as possible. We know that you and we believe that pupils and students being safely in schools and colleges is the best way to address any learning gaps and to protect their future opportunities.

What do we need to ask you to keep doing?

Please keep following the guidelines at your schools based on their risk assessments. We developed these together as a system and they are working. About half of schools and settings have had no confirmed cases and those that have had one usually have just 1 or 2.

No cases are confirmed to have started in a school or college in BCP; they have almost all come from family positive test or from social interaction outside of school or college bubble.

Though largely parents and carers have followed all guidelines in place we feel the need to stress some important messages to keep you child, your family and school community safe and well.

Don't send your child to school with symptoms

Please do not send your child to school if they have the following coronavirus symptoms.

- High temperature
- Continuous cough
- Loss or change in sense of taste
- Loss or change in sense of smell

[More information on symptoms of coronavirus](#) Many of you have kept a child home with these symptoms and sought tests. Schools will send pupils with these symptoms home, but if you have a doubt and wait to understand the illness your child has, you are helping to keep all pupils in school as much as possible which is what we all want.

When a test is confirmed we trace all close contacts with the confirmed case for the most infectious 48 hours. If your child goes in with symptoms, it risks spreading the virus to others and will could mean a large number of pupils are told to self-isolate. In one case it has led to an entire school having to work from home.

[Public Health Dorset has produced information](#) about what to do if your child is experiencing symptoms of coronavirus but also what to do if your child falls ill not related to coronavirus. This will help you make an informed decision.

Self-isolate if waiting for a test

If you or your child has [symptoms of coronavirus](#), your whole household must self-isolate immediately and [book a COVID-19 test](#).

Your whole household must isolate until you get your test result back. If the test comes back negative then you can carry on your normal activities.

Self-isolation means that. You must not leave your house. You are not just not going to school or work, you are not to travel or visit the beach or park and you are not allowed to exercise or shop. You may not invite people to your house.

You may need family and friends to help you get essentials such as food or medication during the time you are isolating. In BCP there is a lot of support in place for families and individuals who are self-isolating.

There is a very supportive system in place in BCP and Dorset for people having to self-isolate and details are set out at the bottom of this note.

Breaking self-isolation is [fineable](#). Schools, Public Health and the council do not want to go down this route; we would appeal to parents and older pupils to think about how much schools being open is valued. Attendance has been high and pupils, students and teachers have been enjoying being back together and working.

The more we stick to the rules, the less likely we are to have an outbreak and the more able we will all be to catch up on missed learning.

What to do if you or your child are 'close contacts'

If your child has been classed as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case, then they will be asked to complete 14 days of self-isolation from last contact with the confirmed case.

This means that they cannot leave home.

If you have other children at school then the child self-isolating cannot come with you on school runs either in the car or walking. Talk to your school about any difficulties you have with this, they and the Council will do what we can to help.

While your child is self-isolating you may need to ask family or friends to pick up your other children.

Your school will ensure that you have access to learning for any children self-isolating who remain well enough to do so. They will also discuss with you how to access FSM and other support as needed.

If you are currently self-isolating as a close contact, then you must arrange for friends or family to do the school run. You must not come to school or leave your home. If you go on holiday abroad and are required to quarantine, you must not do the school run and must make other arrangements.

If you or your child develops [coronavirus symptoms](#) then you must self-isolate immediately and [book a test](#).

A Ministerial Directive to encourage and support people having to self-isolate due to COVID-19, now means that if someone has been told to self-isolate on or after 28 September 2020, they are under a legal obligation to do so, and could be eligible for a £500 Test and Trace Support Payment if they live in England and meet all the criteria.

Full details of entitlement and how it works can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme-claiming-financial-support/claiming-financial-support-under-the-test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme>



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- call our helpline on **01305 221000** (8.30am to 5pm Monday-Friday)
- email communityresponse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
- complete the [Covid Online Form](#)



BCP Council

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Need support?
Our COVID-19 community response helpline is open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday for people in vital need of food and essential household items.

0300 1237052

Complete our online form to ask for help [➔](#)

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