

# Back to School Southwark

Health information for parents and carers of primary  
school children in Southwark



This leaflet was produced by Southwark Council on 21 August 2020.  
Public Health are keeping this guidance under constant review.

#keepsouthwarksafe

#backtoschool@southwark

# Do I need to send my child back to school?

School attendance is mandatory from the start of the academic year, meaning you have a legal duty to send your child to school regularly.

School is incredibly important not only for your child's education, but also their social and emotional wellbeing, and their health.

Time away from school can have a negative impact on children's development. This can impact not only current learning, but also a child's ability to learn in the future. It's important that we support children to return to school to prevent the longer-term impacts of being out of education, including academic and professional achievement.



It is understandable to be worried about COVID-19. However, it is important to remember that, for most people who do catch it, illness from the virus will be very mild. **This is especially true for children.**



The health and safety of children, teaching staff, and families is a top priority. Schools are putting in place a range of safety measures to protect children, staff, and families, and reduce the spread of the virus.

# Who can I speak with if I have concerns?

We know that some people may be particularly worried about COVID-19 if a child or other family member is at higher risk. This may be due to health conditions that meant someone was previously shielding, the age of family members you share a home with, or because you come from a community that is thought to be at higher risk (e.g. Black, Asian, or minority ethnicity).

**If you are concerned about the risk to anyone in your family and whether your child should return to school, please speak with your GP and your school.**

You can also discuss any concerns with your school nurse ([gst-tr.schoolnursespe@nhs.net](mailto:gst-tr.schoolnursespe@nhs.net)) or Southwark's Back to School team: [backtoschool@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:backtoschool@southwark.gov.uk)

## **Southwark's Back to School Webpage!**

Check out Southwark's new webpage for the latest information on support and resources available to parents, children, and young people on returning to school

[www.southwark.gov.uk/backtoschool](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/backtoschool)

# What safety measures have schools put in place?

The Council has been working closely with schools during lockdown to support the implementation of safety measures.



Southwark Public Health have held a number of webinars with schools to address questions and concerns, and provide bespoke advice.

The steps each school will have taken to re-open are likely to differ slightly, taking into consideration the particular school environment. However, each school will be following the same five essential measures:

- 1** Children and staff should only come to school if they're feeling well
- 2** Ensuring frequent hand washing and good respiratory hygiene
- 3** Enhanced cleaning arrangements
- 4** Clear procedures if children or staff become symptomatic at school, encouraging testing and engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- 5** Limiting contacts and maximising physical distancing wherever possible

# What happens if someone has symptoms of COVID-19?

If your child or anyone in your household has symptoms of COVID-19 (**a temperature, a new continuous cough, or loss of/change to taste or smell**), do not send your child to school. Inform your school and **[order a test as soon as possible](#)**.

If a child or member of staff gets these symptoms at school, they will be sent home with advice about what to do.

Anyone who has symptoms or has tested positive will need to self-isolate for at least 10 days, and the rest of the household for 14 days, in-line with **[government guidance](#)**.

If the test results are negative, your household can usually leave self-isolation and your child can return to school, provided they are no longer unwell and no one in your household has been traced as being in contact with someone who has tested positive.

If someone at your school tests positive for Covid-19, Public Health England will work with your school to risk assess who else should be advised to self-isolate.

## **HOW TO ORDER A COVID-19 TEST FOR YOUR CHILD**

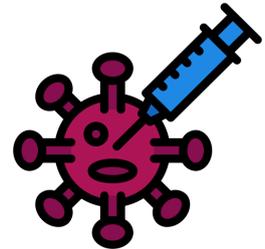
1. First, call NHS 111 for a clinical assessment of your child's symptoms
2. Second, order a test to your house online **<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>** or call 119.

Having trouble ordering a test? Call NHS 119 or get in touch with your school nurse: **[gst-tr.schoolnursespe@nhs.net](mailto:gst-tr.schoolnursespe@nhs.net)**

# What else can I do to prepare for the upcoming year?

This year, **routine immunisations** will be especially important as other contagious viruses are still in circulation.

- Other viruses such as measles are even more contagious than COVID-19 and can lead to serious complications.
- It is likely that seasonal flu and COVID-19 will both be circulating at the same time.
- Therefore, it's more important than ever to ensure your child is up-to-date with their **MMR vaccine**, and that they you receive their **flu jab** this season to protect your child and other people against these illnesses, and reduce pressures on the NHS over winter.



We know the lockdown period has been difficult and that the **wellbeing** of many children has been impacted. One particular example of this is **sleep**.

- Sleep is incredibly important for children's health and wellbeing, including their immune system.
- Children's sleep is likely to have been disrupted due to changes to routine, less physical activity, more screen time (including for online learning), and less time outdoors.
- Children with learning disabilities and children suffering from conditions such as depression or anxiety (new or pre-existing) are also likely to be more vulnerable to disrupted sleep.



**It's really important that children get back into a good sleep schedule and have good quality sleep for their return to school.**

# What else can I do to prepare for the upcoming year? (cont.)

Many children are likely to have spent much of lockdown at home and it's important that we start getting used to being out and about, in a safe way.

- During lockdown, learning and socialising has had to be done virtually. Take the opportunity to start getting children used to socialising safely outdoors!
- Starting to go back to our usual routines can be worrying and it's normal to be anxious about returning to school for the first time in a while.

**A good first step in getting ready for school is to just start doing things! Get outside, meet other children at the park, and socialise face-to-face, in a safe way.**



# Back to school checklist

## *What can I do to keep everyone safe?*



Please **STAY AT HOME** if your child or anyone in your household has symptoms of coronavirus

Check everyone at home is well before your child goes to school, and stay home if anyone has symptoms of COVID-19:

- A high temperature
- A new, continuous cough
- A loss of, or change to, your taste of smell or taste



## Hygiene

Handwashing is vital! Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, with soap and water, especially before and after school, eating, using a tissue, or going to the bathroom.



## Social distancing outside school

Only one parent or carer should take your child to school. Do not stay and chat with other parents at the gates. The safest and healthiest way to travel to school is outdoors. Consider coming to school by foot, by bike, or by scooter if you can.

## Welcome back!

**Schools are doing everything they can to implement safety measures and to keep children healthy. Most children will adapt quickly and well to the changes to the school environment and support be available to those who need more help.**