

# Children Returning to Primary School

## Health Information for Parents and Carers



This leaflet was produced by Camden and Islington Department of Public Health  
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*Public Health are keeping this guidance under constant review.*

*Translated versions are available.*



ISLINGTON

# Should I be sending my child to school?

It is understandable that people are worried about COVID-19. It is important to remember that for most people who do catch it - and especially children - the virus will be mild.

School is important to learn and develop emotional and social skills, but the health and safety of children, teaching staff and their families is the top priority. Schools are putting in place a number of safety measures aimed at protecting children, staff and families and reducing the spread of the virus as more children return to school.

Each family will need to make their own decision on whether it is safe for their child to return depending on individual circumstances and whether anyone at home is shielding or clinically vulnerable. The chance of getting coronavirus and becoming seriously ill depends on many different things including age, gender, other existing illnesses, where in the country you live and your job.

Some communities, for example Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are thought to be at higher risk; this risk may be related not just to ethnicity, but also to the presence of additional health conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, as well as other factors. If you are concerned about the risk for anyone in your family, and whether or not your child should return to school, talk through your concerns with your GP or your school. You can also discuss these with the School Health Team: [whh-tr.Is1SchoolNurse@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.Is1SchoolNurse@nhs.net) or telephone **020 3316 8021**.



**If you decide it is not yet safe for your child to return to school, there will be no fines issued to parents or carers.**

The local advice is:

### **If your child is shielded/clinically extremely vulnerable**

They should not yet attend school.

### **If your child lives with someone who is shielded**

They should not yet attend school. As more children return to school over time, children living in a household with someone who is shielding may be able to attend, if the child is able to understand and maintain social distancing at school and at home.

Some children – for instance younger children and those with special educational needs – might find this difficult. We recommended that you discuss this with your GP and the school.

### **If your child is clinically vulnerable but not shielded**

We recommend that you discuss this with your GP and the school. Your child can attend, if you and your doctor decide that they will be safe.

### **If your child lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable but not shielded**

Your child is allowed to attend, but because some children find social distancing rules difficult to follow, you should make this decision based on your own family circumstances and the arrangements in place in your school. You might want to particularly think about this if you live with grandparents or older relatives, or if anyone has any medical vulnerabilities, especially if you are from a BAME community. We recommend that you discuss this with your school and GP.

# What steps will schools take to keep children safe?

The Council has been working closely with schools to prioritise the safety of children, teaching staff and families, and each school will open to more children when it is safe to do so.

The steps each school take may look slightly different (they will need to consider their own school environment, staff availability and the needs of pupils), but they will all include these 5 key actions for a slow phased return:

1. Frequent hand washing, good hygiene and regular cleaning
2. Ensuring pupils and staff only come to school if they are well
3. Clear procedures if a child or staff show symptoms at school
4. Protecting shielded and clinically vulnerable pupils and their families, by following medical advice on who needs to stay at home
5. Limiting contact by keeping to small groups of children and staff who learn and play together, and keep distant from other groups. Keeping children within the same group is similar to keeping within family groups. It limits the amount of social mixing to help reduce the spread of the virus.



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

1. If your child or anyone in your household have symptoms (**a temperature or a new, continuous cough, or loss of/change to their sense of taste or smell**) please let your school know, and keep your child and the rest of your household at home.
2. If a child or member of staff gets these symptoms in school, they will be sent home with advice about what to do.
3. Anyone with symptoms needs to self-isolate along with all of their household and get tested as soon as possible. Find out how to get a test, and how long to isolate at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)
4. If the test is negative, and the person no longer has symptoms, the child and their household can leave self-isolation and return to school.
5. If a child or member of staff tests positive, then the rest of their small class group will be sent home to self-isolate for 14 days. The households of these other children do not need to isolate, unless their child also develops symptoms.



# What can I do to keep everyone safe?

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

## Hygiene

Handwashing is vital. Wash hands regularly for 20 seconds, with soap and running water, especially before and after school, before and after eating, and after using a tissue or the toilet.

## Social distancing outside school

Only one parent or carer should take your child to school. Do not stay and chat at the school gates. The safest and healthiest way to travel to school is outdoors: on foot, by bike or scooter.



## Welcome Back!

Schools will do everything they can to keep children safe and happy.

Most children will adapt quickly and well to a different way of being in school and the school will provide support to those who need more help.



*Keeping the school community safe is a team effort. There is a vital role for families to play so that children can learn as safely as possible.”*

Julie Billett, Director of Public Health for Camden and Islington