

WHAT  
SCHOOLS  
ARE  
DOING

WHAT  
FAMILIES  
CAN  
DO

## RETURNING TO SCHOOL SEPTEMBER 2020

# GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

What we can all do to keep our schools, our families  
and ourselves safe during COVID-19.

### More information

The information in this booklet is accurate  
and up to date at the time of printing on  
2 September 2020.

For the latest information about  
returning to school and COVID-19 visit  
[www.newham.gov.uk/backtoschool](http://www.newham.gov.uk/backtoschool)  
and become a Newham COVID-19 Health  
Champion.

This booklet is available in  
different languages at  
[www.newham.gov.uk/backtoschool](http://www.newham.gov.uk/backtoschool).



COVID-19  
HEALTH  
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Become a COVID-19 Health Champion  
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## Getting Newham back to school



First of all, I want to say a huge thank you for everything you and your family have done to keep Newham safe since COVID-19 became part of our lives. As a parent I know how challenging this has been for all of us, especially families.

Newham's schools have been working with the Council's Public Health team to make sure everyone can return to school safely in September.

However much we try, we cannot remove every risk. We always have to balance different risks in our lives, and this is no different. The risks of attending school are small, and need to be weighed against the risks of not attending. Finding this balance must recognise the impact of not attending school on children's learning, lifelong opportunities, social connections and health.

Although it feels like we have lived with COVID-19 for a long time, it is still very new. We are learning more about the virus each day.

The science shows that it is safe to return to school because very few children become seriously ill from COVID-19. It also suggests that schools have not been places where a lot of transmission takes place, even in countries that had more schools open during the pandemic. In particular, younger children do not seem to pass COVID-19 to each other, and teachers do not seem to be at risk of catching COVID-19 from children.

Schools are applying the best and latest knowledge and guidance available to ensure they can welcome students and staff back safely. School will look and feel very different because of the COVID-safe changes. The plans have incorporated everything we know about how important school is for families, as well as how children, young people and families have been feeling throughout the pandemic.

Newham Council continues to respond to COVID-19 across the borough every day. Advice is constantly updated as we get more evidence and depending on the state of the virus. If the situation changes, the balance of risks may change. We commit to keep you informed to help you make informed decisions.

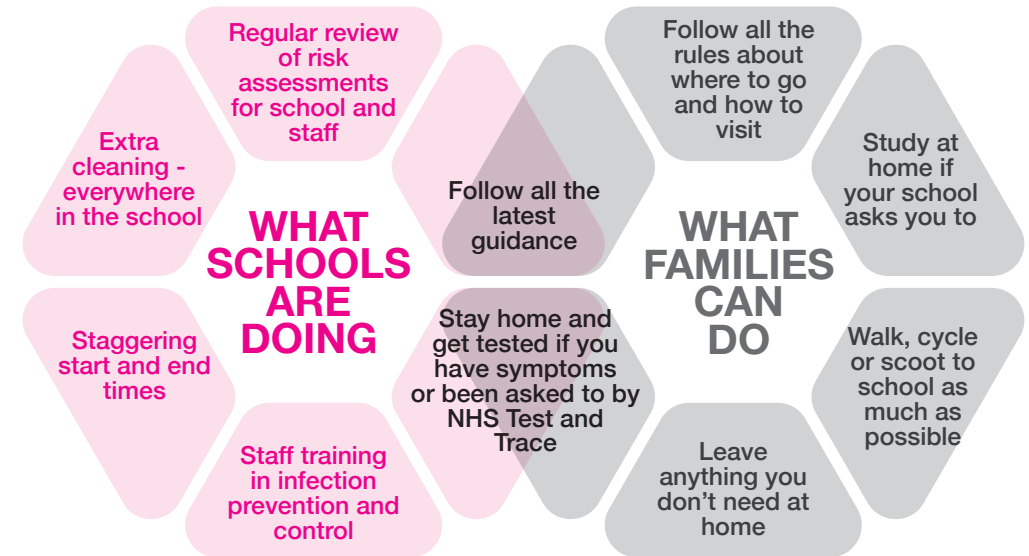
**Jason Strelitz**  
Director of Public Health  
London Borough of Newham

## We all play a part, and depend on each other

We all have the same goal – to keep our families, friends, ourselves and our community COVID-19 safe.

We are committed to ensuring schools are COVID-19 safe. The more the virus is controlled, the safer it is for everyone.

We all play a part, and depend on each other, to keep Newham safe.



## Why returning to school is important

School is important for children and young people, as well as their families.

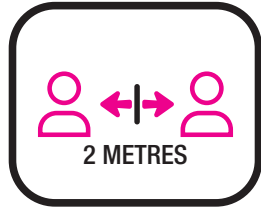
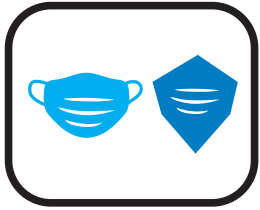
Being at school provides children and young people with more than knowledge. Children and young people develop social connections and a sense of identity while at school, which they use for the rest of their lives.

In addition, schools support students with their mental and physical wellbeing, which is even more important than usual during the pandemic.

## What the evidence tells us

So far, the evidence shows that children, particularly young children

- do not get very sick with COVID-19 (unless they are vulnerable and have heart or immune problems already)
- do not seem to pass COVID-19 to each other or to adults easily, particularly if they aren't coughing.



In general, the virus is spread in people's breath and on surfaces. This is why we need to stay at least 2 metres away from people we do not live (or are in a support or school bubble) with. Wearing a face covering in indoor places is important too – although not necessary at home, and your school will tell you if you need to wear one while at school.

It is also important to catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue (or the elbow) and put the tissue in the bin, as well as regularly washing your hands.

So far, there have been very few examples of COVID-19 being passed between children at school. This is especially true when everyone – parents, teachers, staff and students – follow safety procedures and stay home if they or someone they spend time with has symptoms or is self-isolating.

Newham Council's Public Health and Education teams are working together to keep schools up to date with the latest evidence and guidance so schools can make changes to their rules and procedures if necessary.

## Preparing to return to school

It is completely understandable and normal for both children and adults to be concerned and confused by COVID-19 and returning to school. You can help prepare your child(ren) by:



Explaining that everyone is working to stop the virus from spreading.



Planning things so the lead up to school is fun and distracts them from worries.



Reminding them what they can do to stay safe: Washing hands, face coverings and social distancing.



Listening to their concerns and questions. Be kind to yourself and your family – It is not easy for anyone.

Schools are aware that some children will have lost loved ones or experienced stress at home during COVID-19. They also know that some students will be worried about their health or their family. Schools will work with families to support their students. If your child(ren) had a tough time over the last six months please let your school know so they can make an individualised return plan for them.

## Keeping healthy



Make sure your child(ren) are up to date with their vaccinations. The risk of vaccine preventable childhood diseases is more than the risk of COVID-19.



Travel to school by walking, scooting or cycling – even just one-way – if you can. It not only helps you stay active but also keeps Newham's air clean. Search '**healthy school streets**' on [www.newham.gov.uk](http://www.newham.gov.uk) for more information.



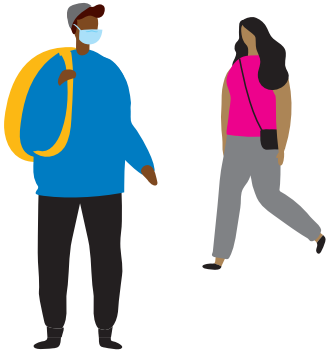
Make plans for after school and weekends – staying active and taking a break from the day-to-day is good for both body and mind!



Eat at least five portions of vegetables and fruit every day and drink plenty of water to help your body fight off infections.

# Staying safe before, during & after school

## Getting ready



- Read the information provided by the school. Contact them if you have questions
- Talk to your child about what school will be like and explain the new rules
- Remind your child that schools are keeping them safe
- Make sure your school has the correct contact details for you
- Let the school know if your child needs additional support to return to school
- Make sure you have face coverings and hand sanitiser ready



## Arriving at school



- Arrive/drop off at the time your school tells you to
- Walk, scoot or bike to school as much as possible
- If using public transport wear a face covering, keep 2 metres apart from others and use hand sanitiser
- Keep 2 metres apart at the school gates, including when talking to staff, other parents, family members, and students



## Being at school



- Schools will have changed how people move around the building and act. Be sure to follow all the rules set by the school
- Stay home if your child or someone in your household has COVID-19, COVID-19 symptoms, or is contacted by NHS Test & Trace
- Contact the school immediately if anyone in your household or support bubble has COVID-19, COVID-19 symptoms, or is contacted by NHS Test & Trace



## Going home



- Go home/pick up at the time your school tells you to
- Walk, scoot or bike home as much as possible
- If using public transport wear a face covering, keep 2 metres apart from others and use hand sanitiser
- Keep 2 metres apart at the school gates, including when talking to staff, other parents, family members and students
- Observe social distancing and hand washing rules if you stop somewhere on the way home
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

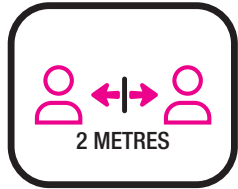
# Keeping us all COVID-19 safe

Every school will have new COVID-19 rules and procedures specific to them. However, staying safe at school is just like staying safe anywhere during COVID-19. Following these steps will keep everyone safe at school, at home and in public:



## 1. Be in touch with your school

- Make sure the school has up to date contact details for you.
- Communicate with the school by phone or email.
- If you have any questions or worries, get in touch with your school.



## 2. Keep your distance

- When at school, follow the rules and make sure you stay in your bubble.
- When in public, keep 2 metres away from people you don't live with. If you can't, wear a face covering and keep interactions short.



## 3. Wear a face covering

- Everyone over 11 years old should wear a face covering in all indoor public spaces.
- Your school will tell you if you need to wear one at school.
- People who need to lip read, or with other disabilities are exempt.



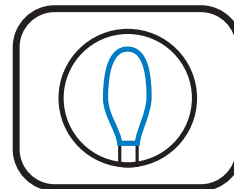
## 4. Wash your hands

- Wash your hands regularly, with soap, for at least 20 seconds. Especially when you get to a new location (e.g. school or home) and before putting on a face covering and after removing it.
- Use hand sanitiser if you cannot wash your hands with soap and water.



## 5. Stay home

- Stay home if you, anyone you live with, or someone you have spent time with has COVID-19, COVID-19 symptoms, or has been asked to by NHS Test & Trace.
- Tell the school if your family or support bubble is self-isolating.



## 6. Get tested

- Get tested if you have COVID-19 symptoms: a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste.
- Book a test at: [www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test](https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test) or call 119.

## What else do I need to know?

### 1. What can we expect from the school?

Schools will provide information to parents about what steps they have put in place to keep their students safe.

Each school will have rules and procedures specific to their building(s), and the number and age of students etc. These include bubbles to limit the interactions between students, keeping social distancing where possible, frequent cleaning of surfaces and more hand washing.

Temperature checks are not recommended, as they are unreliable for adults and children.

All schools are preparing for children with SEND to return to school and, where needed, are putting in place additional measures based on the needs of the children attending their school. We recommend parents contact their school for further information.

### 2. How can I help the school keep my child(ren) safe?

Make sure you and your family are familiar with the new rules, and that the school has up to date contact details for you in case they need to get in touch.

If anyone in your household, or who spends time with your child(ren), has COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms or been told to self-isolate by the Test & Trace service you should let the school know straight away.

### 3. What is a bubble and how do they work?

A bubble is a group of students who will be together every day all term. Many schools will have class 'bubbles'.

If one student in the bubble has tested positive for COVID-19, the whole bubble will stay at home for 14 days.

Where possible keep playdates, shared childcare and shared vehicles etc inside the class bubble.

### 4. What happens if my child gets hurt or sick at school?

The school first aider will help as usual. They will put on some protective clothing – a medical mask, gloves, an apron and visor (as appropriate) – as a precaution.

If your child has COVID-19 symptoms, the school will be in touch so you can collect your child.

### 5. How can I protect my family, particularly if someone is vulnerable?

The best way to protect your family is to follow the guidance on social distancing, face coverings and hand washing at all times. When you get home after being out wash your hands immediately, wipe your mobile phone clean and change your clothes.

If someone in your home develops symptoms contact 111 and your GP for advice and support as quickly as possible, particularly if they are vulnerable.

## More questions? Want more information?

Find out more about how to stay safe at school, at home and when in public at [www.newham.gov.uk/backtoschool](http://www.newham.gov.uk/backtoschool)

If you have COVID-19 questions, including what support is available if your family needs to self-isolate, please contact the COVID-19 Helpline: 020 7473 9711 (1-7pm, 7 days a week) or [covidhelp@community-links.org](mailto:covidhelp@community-links.org)

For the latest up to date information about COVID-19 become a Newham COVID-19 Health Champion by visiting [www.newham.gov.uk/CovidHealthChampions](http://www.newham.gov.uk/CovidHealthChampions).

