

11th December 2020

COVID19 COMMUNITY TESTING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

Dear Parent or Carer

You will be aware of the increasing rate of COVID19 across much of Essex, particularly in young people and young adults. In order to help stop the spread, the Government has made additional testing capacity available for all children/young people and their families to enable you to get a test even if you do not have symptoms of COVID19. This is particularly important now as Christmas approaches and families look forward to meeting and spending time together.

I am therefore urging you to have your child and family tested for coronavirus please. In partnership with the Department for Health and Social Care, we are increasing the number of testing centres local to you for this purpose.

Accessing a Test

You can book a test by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. The website also allows you to order tests by post if you cannot drive to one of the drive-through testing centres. Please select "Yes" to the question "*Is the person who needs a test part of a trial or government pilot project*" on the website. Please do not get a test if you have had a positive test in the last 12 weeks as it may give an incorrect positive result.

If you have been asked to self-isolate by the NHS Test and Trace Programme, your school or the council's Public Health Team because you have been in contact with someone else who has tested positive for COVID19, you can still get tested but you should complete your period of self-isolation even if you test negative. This is because the test may not detect COVID19 in some people who are incubating the virus.

Your child does not need to self-isolate whilst you are waiting for your test result and can attend school, unless they have been asked to learn at home.

Following the Test

If any test result is positive the individual and rest of the household must self-isolate and you should inform your school straight away.

If the test result is negative, they do not need to self-isolate or take any further action and can continue to attend school. They should continue to practice social distancing and good hand hygiene in-line with the national guidance.

I would also ask that your child has a second test in the New Year around 4-7 days before return to school so we can ensure that anyone who may be infectious does not return to school and potentially immediately start an outbreak.

Thank you for your support in helping us to prevent the spread of COVID19 during these difficult times.

With best wishes



Mike Gogarty
Director of Public Health and Wellbeing
Essex County Council