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March 4<sup>th</sup> 2021

Dear parents and carers,

**Arrangements as schools and colleges open fully (including home testing for households with school-age children)**

Ahead of the full reopening of schools and colleges from Monday, 8 March I wanted to write to you, firstly to say thank you. For those who have been home-schooling your children while juggling your many other demands, I know this winter lockdown has been especially tough. I hope you welcome this significant first step towards normality and your children are excited to get back to the classroom with their peers.

Some of you may be feeling a little apprehensive. Please be assured that your school has in place a range of protective measures and everyone involved in education and public health in West Sussex is working together to stop the spread of COVID-19. We are starting to emerge from lockdown because, nationally cases have fallen sharply and I am encouraged that in West Sussex, cases continue to fall in all ages, including school and college-ages.

However, COVID-19 remains in our community and will continue to spread and could pick up again if we don't follow the **Hands. Face. Space** guidance, even if you have had your vaccination.

It's vital that families continue to follow the current rules and support your schools by:

- Not sending children to school if you or they have any COVID-19 symptoms and [getting tested straight away](#)
- Self-isolating if you or someone in your household/support bubble have any COVID-19 symptoms; have tested positive (even if you don't have symptoms); have been told you or your children are a contact of someone with coronavirus.

**Home Testing**

We know that up to one in three people who have coronavirus show no symptoms, so home testing is being rolled out to identify those who may be spreading the virus without knowing it.

Adults who live with primary or secondary age children, and those in their childcare/support bubble, are now eligible and are strongly encouraged to start regular twice-weekly testing from home - though this is not an absolute requirement. This regular no-symptom testing is aimed at helping to keep positive cases out of schools and colleges.

To achieve this, adults who aren't showing any symptoms can now access the same rapid tests (using Lateral Flow Devices) being used to test school staff and secondary pupils from 8 March (details below). Whilst primary or pre-school children are not currently being asked to test, their families are eligible for testing.

The home tests differ from the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests for when someone has symptoms (which are carried out at testing centres and sent to laboratories).

The no-symptom tests deliver results in around 30 minutes. However, please note a negative result from a rapid test does not guarantee you do not have the virus, it means it is undetected and you should continue to follow all the current restrictions and guidance. A positive result using a rapid test will require you to isolate and book a PCR test to confirm the result.

### **How to get home testing kits**

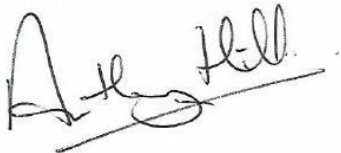
You can get a home testing kit now:

- By searching online for [your nearest COVID-19 Test Site](#) and collecting them from these sites between 1.30pm-7pm. Tests cannot be performed at these sites, they offer collection only.
- Alternatively there is a [new home ordering service](#) available online or by calling 119 (the delivery service is for people who cannot easily get to test sites to collect, for example if you cannot drive or get someone to take you there).
- Secondary-age children who are taking part in testing will be provided test kits by their school. Their first three tests will take place in school from 8 March before they begin testing at home.

You can [read the full government guidance for parents and carers here](#).

Your school will let you know about any specific arrangements they have in place from Monday 8 March, for example details with regard to drop off and collection changes for pupils. If you have questions you are advised to contact your school, who will be able to discuss any concerns with you and let you know about the safety measures they have in place.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Hill', with a horizontal line drawn underneath.

**Dr Tony Hill**  
**Interim Director of Public Health**  
**West Sussex County Council**