

Dear Parent/Carer

Our ref:

Your ref:

Date: 31st December 2020

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COVID19 COMMUNITY TESTING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

You will be aware of the rapidly increasing rate of COVID19 across Southend-on-Sea, Essex and Thurrock, 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.

In light of the recent Government announcement on reopening of schools in the New Year, I am once again urging you to please have your child and family tested for coronavirus before your child returns to school. This will help make sure that no-one is infectious and can start an outbreak.

To help achieve this, we are increasing the capacity and number of mobile testing centres available to you locally, as below:

- Hamlet Court Road car park. A walk-through mobile testing unit site is open **seven days a week (8am to 4pm)**. There is no need to book for this site, you can turn up and say that your local authority has asked you to get a test
- Southend Airport, Long Stay Car Park 3, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6YE – this mobile testing unit is now open **seven days per week 9am-3pm**. Please book through the national system (<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>)
- Short Street local testing site remains open **seven days a week 8am-8pm**. This is available for both walk-through and appointments booked through the national system (<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>)
- The council is working, in partnership with the Department for Health and Social Care, to open four new Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing sites for people without symptoms. LFD tests give results in around 30 minutes. The four sites will be located in different areas across Southend and are planned to open during January 2021. The first site will open on 5th January 2021 at Southend University. **It will open seven days a week (7am-3pm) by appointment only via:**
https://iweb.itouchvision.com/portal/f?p=customer:category_link:::::CUID,LANG:B7DC22EA96004A33E5B4E05314901AE9A8C08E0A,EN&P_LANG=en

Full information about how to get a test is available on our website - <https://www.southend.gov.uk/health-wellbeing/coronavirus/12>

The national testing system also allows you to order home testing kits by post if you cannot drive or walk to one of the testing centres. Please select “Yes” to the question “*Is the person who needs a test part of a trial of 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 (for 10 or 14 days) 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.

Thank you for your support in helping us to prevent the spread of COVID19 during these difficult times. I wish you the very best for the New Year.

With best wishes,



Krishna Ramkhelawon
Director of Public Health