

November 2021

Dear parents/carers

We hope your family had an enjoyable half term break. Now children are back at school and college, we wanted to share the latest advice to minimise disruption to your child's learning and keep them and your family safe this winter.

In winter, viruses like flu and COVID-19 spread more easily. We can see from the weekly Newham COVID-19 dashboard (www.newham.gov.uk/coviddashboard) that in Newham the number of people catching COVID-19 remains high – over 100 people in the borough test positive almost every day.

More than 67% of people in Newham have had their vaccine (including 35% of children aged 12-17 years old). This is important as the COVID-19 vaccine really works and is helping to keep a lot of people out of hospital and away from becoming seriously unwell. The vast majority of people in hospital from COVID-19 have not had their vaccine.

While flu, and even COVID-19, may now feel like a normal part of life, they can still cause severe illness and death, particularly for people who are older or have health conditions like diabetes, lung or heart disease or are having cancer treatments.

How can you improve your chances of good health this winter and reduce disruption to your family?

Schools are working to ensure that there is good ventilation in classrooms. They are following guidance from the Department for Education and minimising disruption to your children's education. You can also help by avoiding COVID when you are out and about at home, at work or at play:

1. Keep doing the basics to **stay safe**:
 - Avoid crowded places or poorly ventilated spaces where possible
 - Wear a face covering or medical mask if in enclosed or crowded public spaces like transport, shops, cinemas etc.
 - Open windows to move the air around at home or in the car
2. **Get vaccinated.** Make sure you and your family have all the doses of COVID-19 vaccine, and flu vaccine when you are eligible. To find out where and when someone can get their vaccine in Newham visit: www.newham.gov.uk/bookyourvaccine. The schedule is updated every Friday.
 - There are lots of places to get vaccinated in Newham and booking is easy: You can book online at www.newham.gov.uk/bookyourvaccine, call the national booking line at 119 (7am-11pm, Monday-Sunday) or our local booking line at **0203 373 6487** (10am-6pm, Monday-Sunday).
 - Some people will get an invitation for their vaccine. This will come from their GP or the NHS by phone or text.
 - Children aged 12-15 will need to have an **on-line consent form** completed to have their vaccine at school. You will be sent a link to the form by your children's school. For help filling out the form, please call **0203 373 6487** (10am-6pm, Monday – Sunday).
 - You can also book at appointment at a local out of school clinic. These are listed on the vaccine schedule and are available to book at www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination. **You don't have to fill out a consent form on-line for these.** You can fill it out in person when you arrive for your appointment.

- If you have any questions you can always ask to speak to one of our vaccine peer supporters by emailing covidhealthchampions@newham.gov.uk or calling 0203 373 2777.
3. If someone in your household is in secondary school, they should **keep testing** with FREE rapid lateral flow device (LFD) tests twice a week. Tests can be picked up from libraries and pharmacies or ordered FOR FREE online. Find out more at www.newham.gov.uk/testing
 4. If anyone of any age in the house tests positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms remember they still need to **stay home and isolate for 10 days**:
 - a. Children in a household where someone else has COVID-19 (test or symptoms) should also test with a lateral flow test every day while continuing to attending school and awaiting a PCR test result. This gives an early warning and helps keep school class mates and staff safe.
 - b. Children who receive a positive lateral flow test result should isolate and book a PCR test to confirm their result. If the PCR test result is negative, children should go back to school providing they do not have symptoms.
 - c. There is still financial support, help with shopping or someone to talk with. For support please call the Newham COVID-19 Helpline on 020 7473 9711 or email covidhelp@community-links.org

If you want to receive regular information on COVID-19 this winter please join the Community Health Champions. Email covidhealthchampions@newham.gov.uk or WhatsApp 07929792873.

Finally, we know that children and young people have missed a lot of time in school and college since the pandemic started, and that there is no substitute for face-to-face learning. It is important to remember that attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age. This means it is your legal duty as a parent to send your child to school regularly if they are registered at one. If you have concerns about your child attending, you should discuss these with your child's school or college.



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5 STEPS FOR COVID-19 WELLBEING

STAY SAFE  Do the basics	BE KIND  Look after yourself & those around you	STAY HOME  If you have symptoms, or test positive	GET TESTED  Know your Covid-19 status	GET VACCINATED  Protect yourself and others
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www.newham.gov.uk/coronavirus