

Barking Town Hall  
1 Town Square  
Barking  
IG11 7LU

16<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to you as your local Director of Public Health to let you know what will happen if someone at your child's school tests positive to Covid-19 and what you and your household would be required to do.

Since the return to school we have seen a very small number of schools affected by positive cases of Covid-19. This has meant in some instances, a class or a year group bubble being sent home and asked to self-isolate for 14 days. Before re-opening, we worked with schools to ensure they had measures in place so they could manage any cases in the best possible way, to reduce disruption for the whole school. These measures are now coming into play.

If someone at your child's school tests positive for Covid-19, the local authority and Public Health England will work with your child's school to risk assess who else should be advised to self-isolate. Children and adults should only get tested if they have symptoms. School lessons for the rest of the pupils will carry on as normal.

We know that as a parent you will want peace of mind if your child's class or bubble has been sent home, but please only book a test if your child has symptoms. At the moment, we have been told there is a shortage of laboratory capacity, which means Covid-19 tests need to be prioritised for people with symptoms. If you book a test without symptoms, you could be taking a slot from someone who could genuinely have the virus.

If your child does have symptoms, has a test and it shows as positive, they will be required to self-isolate and you will be contacted by the NHS test and trace system team to find out who else they have been in recent contact with. If a pupil (including your child) or staff member has been in contact with a person who has Covid-19, they will need to self-isolate for 14 days to help prevent the virus spreading further. If your child is sent home, they will continue with their studies online - if they are able to do so.

If your child or anyone in your household has symptoms of Covid-19 (a temperature, a new continuous cough or loss of/change to taste or smell), do not send your child to school. Contact the school and order a test as soon as possible. To order a test, please call NHS 119 or book online at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

If a child or member of staff develops symptoms at school, they will be sent home with advice about what to do.

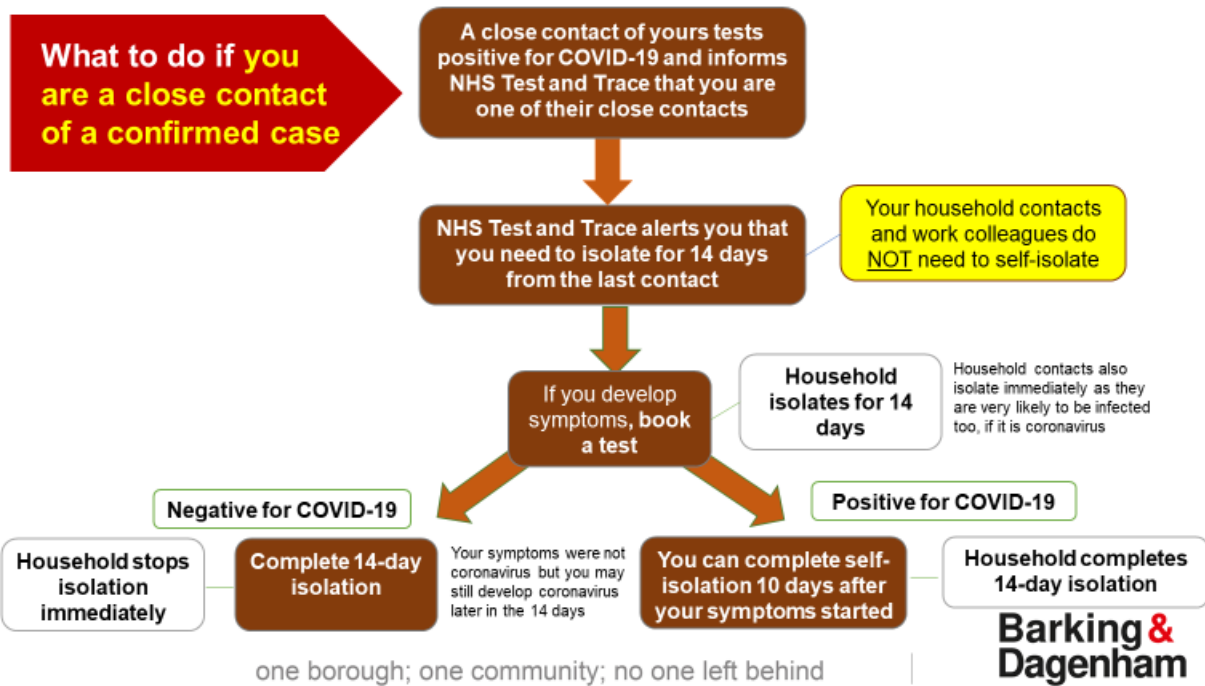
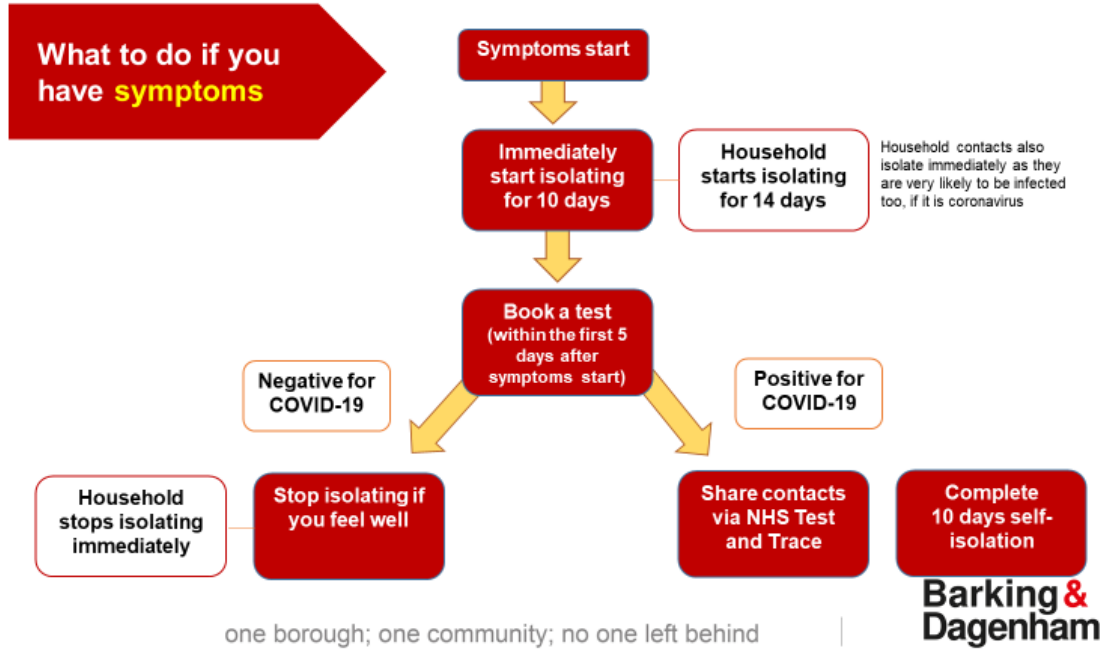
Anyone who has symptoms or has tested positive will need to self-isolate for at least 10 days, and the rest of the household for 14 days, in line with the latest stay at home guidance.

If the test results are negative, your household can usually leave self-isolation and your child can return to school, but only if they're no longer unwell and no one in your household has been traced as being in contact with someone who has tested positive.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Cole', written in a cursive style.

Matthew Cole  
Director of Public Health



## FAQs – General advice to the public

### **How will I know if I need to self-isolate?**

When a person who has symptoms receives a positive test result for Covid-19, the NHS test and trace service will ask them to share information about their close contacts just before and after they developed symptoms.

Any non-household contacts who need to self-isolate will be contacted by the NHS test and trace service. They will receive a formal notification (either a phone call, letter, email or text message) setting out what to do.

The period of self-isolation will be for 14 days from the point of most recent contact with the person who has tested positive for coronavirus

### **What does it mean to self-isolate?**

- Do not leave your home for any reason – if you need food or medicine, order it online or by phone, or ask friends and family to drop it off at your home
- Unless it is possible for you to work from home, do not attend work. You will need to contact your employer to advise them that you have been told to self-isolate. Your employer may ask to see the formal notification.
- Do not have visitors in your home, including friends and family – except for essential care
- Try to avoid contact with anyone you live with as much as possible
- People you live with do not need to self-isolate unless a person in that household has had symptoms but they must take extra care to follow the guidance on social distancing and handwashing and avoid contact with you at home.

It's really important to do this even if you don't feel unwell because, if you have been infected, you could become infectious to others at any point up to 14 days after contact with a case.

### **A person I have had close contact with in the last 2 days has told me they have coronavirus symptoms and they are being tested. What should I do?**

You do not need to self-isolate while the person with symptoms is awaiting their test result. But you should;

- take extra care in practicing social distancing and good hygiene, like washing your hands regularly.
- remain vigilant for your own symptoms
- avoid individuals who are at high-risk of contracting COVID-19, for example, because they have pre-existing medical conditions, such as respiratory issues, or are over age 70.
- be aware that you may receive a notification from the NHS test and trace service advising you need to self-isolate.

## **What will happen if someone I don't know personally but come into contact with, such as on public transport, tests positive for Covid-19?**

- Everyone should continue to follow the social distancing guidelines by remaining 2m apart ( or 1 m plus) from others and wearing a face covering on public transport , shops , banks , building societies and post offices or in other settings where social distancing is not possible. From 8<sup>th</sup> August, the list will be extended to a greater number of public indoor settings, such as museums, galleries, cinemas and public libraries. Full list available [here](#)
- The NHS Covid-19 app, which is expected to be rolled out shortly, will enable the test and trace service to anonymously alert app users who have come into close contact with other app users who test positive for Covid-19.

## **What does NHS Test & Trace do with my data and information?**

When someone is contacted by the NHS test and trace service and told they have been in contact with someone with coronavirus, they will not be told who that person was, to protect anonymity.

The information they provide will be handled in strict confidence and will only be kept and used in line with data protection laws. It will help with contacting people who are at risk of having been exposed to coronavirus and explain what they must do to help prevent the further spread of the virus.