



Dear Parents/carers

I hope you and your families are keeping safe and well during this period. It is great to see so many children and young people enjoying the return to school in those key year groups identified by government. We look forward to welcoming all of our children back to schools and settings in September.

Our schools within BwD have developed thorough Risk Assessments in opening schools to wider pupils and continue to update these ready for September. Schools as part of infection control are all being thoroughly cleaned to help prevent the spread of the virus, as we have been instructed to do by Public Health England.

As well as thorough cleaning, schools are also continuing to:

- Enforce hand-washing or providing hand sanitisers
- Maintain social distancing
- Provide lessons for pupils about hygiene
- Providing ongoing advice and support to children about how to deal with anxiety
- Providing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment for staff in schools

We are sending this letter to all our schools and settings in the area to inform you:

Infection rates in the Borough are rising and as part of our Community response, we want to stress the importance of further coronavirus testing.

A temporary mobile testing site is being introduced at the car park at Witton Park Academy from Saturday, July 11th. We are very grateful to the school for supporting our response to this and want to make it very clear the location is based on easy access for the Community and not linked to the school.

The centre will be running between 11am to 6.30pm for the next week. This will be a drive-through and walk-in testing site and appointments are not needed. It is free and is available for all ages.

People will be expected to carry out their swabs themselves, which will then be handed to staff to store safely and send for processing.

You will also need to fill your details in for the testing staff to contact you with the results.

Please attend the temporary mobile site if you would like to be tested as a precaution.

You can use NHS 111 online if you or your child feels ill and you want to know what to do next.

Dominic Harrison, Director of Public Health for Blackburn with Darwen, said: “We are continuing to take this situation very seriously and monitoring it very closely. Whilst we haven’t had the level of outbreak seen in Leicester and other areas, we are aware of our raised rate of confirmed cases according to recent data. We are therefore introducing a range of measures to mitigate risks in a proportionate and phased way that would avoid us having to lockdown.

“In the first instance this includes introducing mobile testing in a central location in the borough with the capability to move around to any areas of concern. We have also published our outbreak management plan, are stepping up our local prevention work week-on-week with vulnerable settings and are strengthening our communications with key groups. We are working closely with the local NHS to make Pennine Lancashire ‘second wave ready’ and are making plans to increase the availability of local testing for higher risk groups.

“My message continues to be: stick to 2 metres social distancing wherever possible, increase daily handwashing and wear a face covering in all enclosed public space. For schools, continue to follow the national guidance on making your spaces Covid-safe.

“Above us all else we need to work together to keep Blackburn with Darwen a Covid-safe borough. It’s up to us all to stick by the rules and protect each other.”

We need to make sure that we are doing everything we possibly can to prevent the spread of the virus in our Community.

Providing it is safe to do so we look forward to the full welcoming of children back to schools and settings in September.

Kind regards,

Jayne Ivory, Director of Children’s Services  
Dominic Harrison, Director of Public Health and Wellbeing