



Our Ref MV/KB
If you telephone please ask for Your ref Mil Vasic
Date 18th December 2020
E-mail address Milorad.Vasic@halton.gov.uk

Dear Parent and Carer,

I hope this letter finds you well and I would like to thank you for all that you have done to support your children attend their early year's settings, schools and colleges and adhere to self-isolation when required.

Your efforts have played an important part in bringing transmission rates down in Halton and your continued support will be needed over the Christmas and New Year break to ensure rates remain low and children can return in the New Year.

As difficult as it is I would ask that you consider how much mixing you need to do over the Christmas break and how you can continue to reduce the risks, remembering that some people such as the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions continue to be at much greater risk.

There are things you can do at all times to reduce the risk of infection:

- Understand the rule and restrictions that are in place (you'll find them at www.halton.gov.uk)
- Stick to your bubbles
- If you, or anyone in your household are required to self-isolate, ensure that this is done for the full isolation period – this is a requirement in law. If you do need to isolate, you may be eligible for a £500 payment.
- Avoid unnecessary contact with other people and reduce travel
- Open windows for ventilation
- Continue to wash your hands thoroughly and more often
- Continue with good respiratory hygiene: use a tissue and catch it, bin it kill it.
Remember there are other infections doing the rounds over the winter period including influenza (flu). Please ensure you have your flu vaccination if you are in a vulnerable group.

Between 23-27 December you will be able to form a Christmas bubble, which can include people from *up to* three households. You can only be in one Christmas bubble, which must not change. Other guidance from the Government for the Christmas period can be found here. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-the-christmas-period>

At other times, please follow the local rules on where you can go and who you can meet, including on New Year's Eve when your Christmas bubble will no longer apply. See www.halton.gov.uk for more information on this.



To help reduce transmission and help schools and colleges open fully I would also encourage you to access the new rapid, *no symptoms* testing that is available in Halton and across the Liverpool City Region. In Halton, the sites are located at Grangeway Community Centre, Runcorn and Ditton Community Centre, Widnes. The test can identify people with the virus who are unknowingly passing it on to others - which is really important as we look to spend more time with people over Christmas. The test takes about 10 minutes to do and you will have a result in about 30 minutes.

Smart no-symptom sites are open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 6pm and Saturday/Sunday 10am to 3pm. Over Christmas the opening times are as follows:

- 24 December: Closed
- 25 December: Closed
- 26 December: Closed
- 27 December: Closed
- 28 December: Closed
- 29 December: Open 10am – 2pm
- 30 December: Open 10am – 2pm
- 31 December: Open 10am – 2pm
- 1 January: Closed
- 2 January: Open 10am – 2pm
- 3 January: Open 10am – 2pm

Other information can also be found here:
<https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/health/smart.aspx>

These sites are only for people with no symptoms, if you do have symptoms, you and your household should self isolate and book a test online at www.gov.uk or by calling 119.

Finally, on behalf of the Council I would like to wish you a safe and Merry Christmas, and a happy New Year.

Yours Sincerely,



Mil Vasic
Strategic Director, People