



Clacton County High School

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Higher Expectations, Raising Aspirations

Our reference: CTALET14/LH

19th October 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

As you will now be aware, as of Saturday, 17th October, most parts of Essex have moved into local COVID alert Tier 2, which means that we are now designated as a high level risk area with confirmed cases of the COVID-19 virus rising exponentially throughout the county. The move to the next tier is intended to minimise the exposure to the virus for all the Essex population.

I have been asked to forward to you a letter from Councillor Gooding, from Essex County Council, which gives some context and explains the reasons for the move to the next the next tier alert setting. I am sure we are all, both equally worried and disappointed about this change; however, it is important that we do all that we can to mitigate the risks, limit the opportunities for transmission and keep our schools open for the benefit of all of our young people not only for their education but to support their emotional well-being too.

I have attached a Q&A from Essex, which may help answer some questions about what this high tier status means; the key message for us is that schools will continue as normal and the only significant difference is that in all secondary schools face coverings are now mandatory inside of the building unless eating or in a classroom.

Whilst most of our students have already been following this very well, we still have a small minority of students coming in every day without a face covering (not counting those who are medically exempt). It is vital that we have your support in ensuring your child has at least one face covering with them at all times. If they are bringing a single use one, they should probably bring a spare in case theirs breaks during the day; we have not had this issue with fabric coverings.

I would also like to bring your attention some information regarding childcare arrangements for children aged 13 and under (paid or unpaid), which may be of use to you. The following people can provide childcare support in private homes or gardens: registered childcare providers, including nannies, people in a support bubble and people in childcare bubbles. A childcare bubble is where someone in one household provides informal childcare for someone from a different household; however, this arrangement must always be between the same two households.

Please rest assured that we will continue to do all that we can in school, reminding students to wear their face coverings, regularly sanitise their hands, not to share equipment, to avoid direct physical contact during social times, amongst many other things, however it is very important that we all give consideration to our actions outside of educational settings too.

As a community, by working in partnership and following the Tier 2 requirements, I am sure we will be able to return to Tier 1 and meet up again with our extended family and friends as soon as we possibly can.

Thank you in anticipation of your support in reminding your child of all of the important safety advice and in particular that it is now an official directive for face coverings to be worn in all areas of the school outside of classrooms, unless exempt or to eat.

Thank you also to all those parents who have taken the time to write in and express their gratitude for the efforts of the staff at CCHS, it is very welcomed and greatly appreciated.

To all families, please stay safe and keep well.

Yours sincerely

CHRIS TAYLOR
Head of School

Monday 19 October 2020

Dear parents and carers,

On Thursday, the government approved the request presented by Essex County Council (ECC) and supported by Council leaders to move to Local COVID-19 Alert Level: High. This change came into effect at midnight on Friday 16 October.

You can find the full details on our website at essex.gov.uk/news/government-confirms-essex-to-move-to-high-covid-alert-level

None of the three alert levels introduced by the government have direct implications on the operations of schools and colleges. Education settings in Essex will remain open full-time to all students and pupils.

Schools and colleges have strong measures in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19. These preventative measures – such as keeping pupils in class or year group-sized bubbles, extra handwashing and phased starts – greatly reduce the risk of COVID-19 being transmitted.

In education settings that teach those in Year 7 and above, students and adults should now wear face coverings when moving around indoors, unless the person is exempt from doing so. This requirement would apply in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain. We have asked schools to review their risk assessments and to inform you of any changes they have introduced. Parents will need to provide their child with a mask and ensure they know how and when to wear it.

It is now more important than ever for young people, parents and families to consider their actions outside education settings.

We must all follow the social contact restrictions that come with Essex's move to the High alert level. Only one household / support bubble can mix inside. Outside, the rule of six applies.

It is crucial that young people and parents maintain a two-metre distance from others at the school gate during dropping-off and picking-up time. This cannot be stressed enough: you are highly unlikely to catch or spread COVID-19 through air-borne particles if you maintain this distance. We urge you to work with our education leaders to keep our settings, schools and colleges safe for staff, pupils and the wider community.

Those who can travel to school or college safely by walking, cycling or scooting are recommended to do so. To help with this, there is a dedicated Getting to School section on ECC's Stop.Swap.GO! website, which can be found at stopswapgo.co.uk/getting-to-school. It includes maps and information on cycling and walking routes to schools and colleges in Essex, as well as suggested drop-off zones away from the school gate to reduce congestion in some of the county's busiest areas. Those able to wear face coverings must do so when travelling on home to school or public transport.

Early years and childcare settings – including childminders, after-school clubs and nannies – can still be used under High alert level restrictions.

Informal childcare (defined as unpaid and unregistered childcare) can be provided in private homes by people in your support bubble or your childcare bubble. A childcare bubble is where someone in one household provides childcare to a child aged 13 or under in another household. For any given childcare bubble, this must always be between the same two households. The full guidance on childcare in High alert level areas can be found at [gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-level-high#childcare](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-level-high#childcare)

You may ask why children and young people can mix with lots of other people in schools and colleges but not see their grandparents. The reason is that we are prioritising keeping education settings open, and in order to do this, we need to make difficult trade-offs elsewhere.

Every contact avoided helps reduce the potential for the virus to spread, so your child not having contact with a relative outside their household becomes a really important action in reducing the reproduction rate (the 'R rate') of the virus. Closing schools would help but is not something we would want to do because education has a major impact on children's long-term health, wellbeing and economic outcomes. This action would also impact severely on parents' ability to work and will only be implemented as a last resort.

Moreover, schools, colleges and other sectors are deemed COVID-secure places, with protective measures in place to reduce transmission. These measures are not required in household settings, nor could they be effectively enforced.

The decision we made with our district leaders and MPs to ask for this move to the High alert level was not taken lightly, and we know this may not be welcome news to many who live in Essex. But we are extremely concerned about the exponential growth of cases and our ability to control the spread of the virus with the current restrictions available to us.

We are confident this swift action now will ultimately help protect residents, businesses and the NHS in the coming weeks and months.

Thank you for your support.

Yours faithfully,

Councillor Ray Gooding

Cabinet Member for Education,
Essex County Council.

Q&A Regarding Essex moving to the COVID Local Alert Level: High

15th October 2020

What is the government's new system of local restrictions?	<p>The government has announced a new simplified system of three levels of restrictions aimed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The three levels are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• level 1 – MEDIUM is the level the majority of the country were in as at Monday 12th October.• level 2 – HIGH includes some increased restrictions, particularly on different households meeting indoors• level 3 – VERY HIGH is the highest level of restrictions and includes the closure of some hospitality business and venues, as well as travel restrictions. <p>Full details can be found in the government guidance on local COVID-19 alert levels.</p>
Why is Essex moving to Level 2 – High?	<p>The numbers of COVID-19 infection are rising, so action is needed to bring the numbers down. The earlier action can be taken the quicker the numbers can be brought under control. The aim is to 'flatten the curve' of new cases. Modelling based on analysis of the data suggests that moving into level 2 can flatten the curve and potentially mean ending restrictions earlier.</p>
What changes as a result?	<p>The key change is that households cannot mix together indoors, unless within a support bubble. This includes within households and other indoor venues such as restaurants and pubs. Otherwise the rules remain as they are, including the rule of 6 in outdoor spaces.</p>
What does this mean for childcare provision?	<p>Under the COVID alert level: high, the following people can provide childcare support in private homes and gardens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• registered childcare providers, including nannies• people in a support bubble• people in a childcare bubble <p>A childcare bubble is where someone in one household provides informal (unpaid and unregistered) childcare to a child aged 13 or under in another household. For any given childcare bubble, this must always be between the same 2 households.</p>

	<p>Friends or family who do not live with you and are not part of a support or childcare bubble must not visit your home to help with childcare. Childcare bubbles are to be used to provide childcare only, and not for the purposes of different households mixing where they are otherwise not allowed to do so.</p>
<p>Can I still go to parks/open spaces/the seaside?</p>	<p>Yes, under medium and high level restrictions. Under very high level rules, there are restrictions on non-essential travel.</p>
<p>Will vulnerable people be asked to shield again?</p>	<p>Currently there is no change as a result of the move to level high that impacts on people who were previously advised to shield.</p> <p>If further advice or support is needed please visit the Essex Wellbeing Service or call them on 0300 303 9988.</p>
<p>Will secondary schools move to a remote learning blended offer?</p>	<p>There is no change to the education system in Essex as a result of moving to the high alert level.</p> <p>The 'contain framework' which includes reference to a rota system for secondary schools is separate to the Local COVID Alert levels and is NOT what is being implemented in Essex. Please do not refer to the 'contain framework' dated 28th Aug as this does not apply.</p>
<p>Are face coverings now mandatory?</p>	<p>Yes. In education settings where Year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults (staff and visitors) and pupils when moving around indoors, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain.</p> <p>Exemptions to this rule apply for specific individuals.</p>