

## Message from the Sefton Director of Public Health to Parents and Carers

Dear parents and carers,

On 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020 a national system of local COVID alert levels was introduced. Central government imposed 'Very High' (Tier 3) alert level regulations for Sefton and the rest of Liverpool City Region on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

With schools and educational settings due to break for half term, we wanted to provide some information about what these measures mean so that you can consider these circumstances when planning half term activities. It is now more important than ever that people follow these latest measures.

Health care leaders from across Merseyside are also encouraging all residents to play their part by:

- 1. washing your hands**
- 2. avoiding crowds**
- 3. keeping your distance**
- 4. not meeting other households in houses or indoor venues, e.g. restaurants**
- 5. using face coverings** – these should cover the nose and mouth
- 6. staying at home and getting tested if you have symptoms no matter how mild** – the main symptoms are a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste. Tests should be booked at [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or by calling 119.
- 7. following self-isolation advice if you are the contact of a positive case or a household member of a symptomatic individual**

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### What do the measures mean?

The measures state that it is now against the law to meet socially with friends and family indoors in any setting unless they are part of your household or support bubble. This includes private homes and indoors in hospitality venues, such as restaurants. You must not have children from other households or families to stay in your home, for example for dinner or a sleepover. You must also not meet with people outside of your household or support bubble in a private garden or in most outdoor public venues.

You may continue to see friends and family you do not live with (or have formed a support bubble with) in groups of 6 or less, including children of any age, in certain outdoor public spaces. These outdoor public spaces include parks, beaches, outdoor sports facilities and public gardens. Please remember HANDS, FACE, SPACE when out.

Informal childcare can also be provided via childcare bubbles. Children can also spend time with another parents as part of a joint custody arrangement.

Further information about measures can be found at [www.sefton.gov.uk/covid19](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/covid19)

### **Can children and young people take part in Halloween activities?**

October half term is usually a time for family activities and to enjoy the Autumn period. Sadly, this year, in Sefton and other parts of Merseyside we are asking people not to take part in traditional trick or treating. 'Trick or Treating' can increase infection risk by increasing social mixing between different households. Furthermore, Halloween parties with children and adults from different household are not permitted. We know that it is a difficult time for children and young people, especially as they will not be able to take part in some usual Halloween night activities. Further guidance, and advice on suggested alternatives, will be available over the coming days.

### **What are the rules around childcare?**

Registered childcare providers, including nannies, people in your support bubble and people in your childcare bubble can provide childcare support in private homes and gardens.

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. This must always be between the same 2 households. 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.

### **I was previously shielding/was identified as extremely clinically vulnerable, what do the measures mean for me?**

The Liverpool City Region, including Sefton, have had local restrictions imposed but Shielding has **NOT** been reintroduced across the region.

It is however advised that clinically extremely vulnerable people do take special care for example by avoiding busy areas to minimise the chance of coming into close contact with others, staying at home as much as possible and where possible working from home. Where there is no alternative, people can still go to work but their employer is required to take steps to ensure your workplace is COVID-secure.

If you have any concerns or queries regarding medical needs, please check with your GP or Consultant.

## **My child or the child I care for was previously identified as extremely clinically vulnerable, what does this mean for them?**

All pupils and students should continue to attend education settings within Sefton under the new regulations, unless they are one of the very small number of pupils or students under pediatric or other specialist care and have been advised by their GP or clinician not to attend an education setting.

## **Is there any support for my child's health and wellbeing?**

It is important that we take care of the health and wellbeing of children and young people across Sefton during these challenging times. That means that we as parents and carers must look after our own mental health. If you would like some advice or information on help available visit [www.sefton.gov.uk/miscellaneous-pages/health-and-wellbeing-for-children-and-young-people-during-covid19.aspx](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/miscellaneous-pages/health-and-wellbeing-for-children-and-young-people-during-covid19.aspx)

Finally, I would like to address a worrying rise in the spread of misinformation about COVID-19. Suggestions that the pandemic is a hoax, or caused by 5G, and the refusal of some to wear a mask or comply with the new guidance serves only to cause confusion and puts lives at risk.

COVID-19 and its effects on people's lives and livelihoods is very real. While I completely understand the frustration that many people feel at further restrictions, I plead with every resident in Sefton to protect one another by following them.

If you have any questions about the virus, or the restrictions please do visit our website where you will find lots of information and advice at [www.sefton.gov.uk/covid19](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/covid19).

Many thanks for your support in helping us through these difficult circumstances.

Yours Sincerely



MARGARET JONES

Director of Public Health

Sefton Council