

Christmas Planning and supporting parents and carers in returning pupils and students in January

How things have been since the end of lockdown.

When we emerged from lockdown, we were allocated Tier 2 at the end of November in BCP and Dorset. Cases and positive tests have reduced substantially thanks to the hard work of people in BCP and Dorset. Case levels and local responses can be accessed weekly each Thursday at the [Public Health Dorset website](#).

Now that lockdown has finished BCP is in [Tier 2](#) which like everywhere else will be reviewed on the 16th December and every 2 weeks after that.

This is good news but we are all advised that we remain in a High Tier and need to maintain the effort we have been putting in to protect our families and also to help keep schools and other education open. All of us would also like to support moving to Tier 1 so that we can see more of the people that we love.

What does Tier 2 mean?

MEETING FRIENDS AND FAMILY  No mixing of households indoors, apart from support bubbles. Maximum of six outdoors.	BARS, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS  Pubs and bars must close, unless operating as restaurants. Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals. Venues must stop taking orders at 10pm and must close by 11pm.	RETAIL  Open.	WORK AND BUSINESS  Everyone who can work from home should do so.
EDUCATION  Early years settings, schools, colleges and universities open. Childcare, other supervised activities for children, and childcare bubbles permitted.	INDOOR LEISURE  Open.	ACCOMMODATION  Open.	PERSONAL CARE  Open.
OVERNIGHT STAYS  Permitted with household or support bubble.	WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS  15 guests for weddings, civil partnerships, wedding receptions and wakes; 30 for funerals.	ENTERTAINMENT  Open.	PLACES OF WORSHIP  Open, but cannot interact with anyone outside household or support bubble.
TRAVELLING  Reduce the number of journeys you make and walk or cycle if possible. Avoid busy times and routes on public transport. Avoid car sharing with those outside of your household or support bubble. Avoid entering a Tier 3 area, other than where necessary such as for work or education. Further exemptions apply.	EXERCISE  Classes and organised adult sport can take place outdoors, but cannot take place indoors if there is any interaction between people from different households. Organised activities for elite athletes, under-18s and disabled people can continue.	RESIDENTIAL CARE  COVID-secure arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, and window visits. Outdoor/airtight visits only (rollout of rapid testing will enable indoor visits including contact).	LARGE EVENTS  Sport, live performances and business meetings limited to 50% capacity or 2000 people outdoors (whichever is lower) and 50% capacity or 1000 people indoors (whichever is lower)

The big change from before lockdown is that we can no longer meet with people outside our support bubble indoors and just a maximum of 5 others outdoors. This is important for schools, as in BCP so far Covid has come from community transmission and not within the schools themselves.

So we would encourage you to keep an eye on the rules above and reinforce them with your children and wider family.

Questions and support

Cases have reduced in BCP for 3 weeks isn't this good news?

It is very good news. However because the disease takes time between when you meet it and when you have symptoms (2-14 days) this reduction is related to lockdown. As we move into Tier 2 and people start to work, shop and travel more, there is a risk of the rate of disease rising again.

Schools have seen a drop in cases during lockdown. We need to try to keep that up.

So when you are shopping or out and about before Christmas encourage children and family members to be aware of;

- Crowds and avoiding them
- Cleaning trolleys and baskets
- Wearing masks where needed
- Creating distance especially for at risk groups

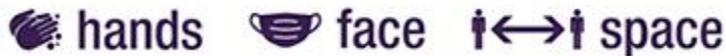
How can parents and carers continue to support schools, colleges and universities remain open face to face?

By sticking to the rules and reinforcing them with children and young people. As time moves on it can become a bit boring repeating the messages, but please be aware that they **are** helping.

Remind your family that they should stay home if they have any of the following symptoms;

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

and reinforce the need for social distancing with;



They should be keeping contact with people outside of school to the rules of Tier 2 and must not socialise with more than 1 other person beyond the family bubble and only outdoors. This is hard, but it makes a big difference to the rate of the spread of the disease.

Where children are in a bubble at Christmas with you and family/friends; they can't make separate additional bubbles of their friends.

Christmas Support Bubbles

What is a Christmas Bubble?

The guidance for families over Christmas is set out [here](#). It outlines what relaxation of the rules can take place between the 23rd and 27th December only. During this time you can;

- form an exclusive 'Christmas bubble' composed of people from no more than 3 households
- only be in one Christmas bubble
- stick to your bubble alone; you cannot change your Christmas bubble each day-this is for these 5 days only-you can't see other members of family or friends who are not in your bubble
- travel between tiers and UK nations for the purposes of meeting your Christmas bubble
- only meet your Christmas bubble in private homes or in your garden, places of worship, or public outdoor spaces

You **must** continue to behave within your Christmas bubble according to [the rules in the tier you are meeting in](#) so if you spend Christmas in a Tier 3 area you have to follow those rules, which are more limited than here.

How does this impact schools and education more generally?

Schools, Bournemouth and Poole College and the 3 universities have been open for face to face teaching and attendance has been good. We know parents and carers have really helped schools by reinforcing the rules and keeping children off whilst testing takes place, if they or a family member has any of the symptoms of Covid.

This has helped most schools to stay open fully and many have not had cases at all. This means that adhering to government guidance is very important and will help schools to re-open safely in January so that more of the learning missed in lockdown can be caught up.

How can we help schools and education to stay open?

- Obey the rules and observe social distance. Look at ways you can make Christmas as safe as can be in your household
- Travel as little as possible and if you need to/are asked to quarantine or self-isolate you must do so even over the 5 day lightening of the rules
- Keep up hand hygiene and mask wearing where required
- Avoid crowds and keep high vigilance on main 3 symptoms
- Be alert to symptoms but also remember that in the run up to the holidays you need more awareness not less; there could be asymptomatic family members in your bubble.

[Check the NHS website if you have symptoms](#)

If you/your child develop COVID-19 symptoms or have receive a positive test result over the holidays;

Stay at home and begin to self-isolate for 10 days from when your [symptoms](#) start. Arrange to have a [test](#) for COVID-19 if you have not already had one. The result of the test will determine how long you and your household must stay at home and self-isolate.

Even at Christmas you must self-isolate if there is a confirmed case in your household.

You may be contacted either by school/college in the first few days of the holiday or by track and trace later and you **must self-isolate** if told to do so. There are details about how to get support with food and other essential items via the Togetherwecan number below.

From the 14th of December isolation for contacts and confirmed cases will be 10 days.

For others in the house who don't have symptoms if there's a positive test in the family

Stay at home for 10 days from the 14th December. The 10 day period starts from the day the first person in your household developed [symptoms](#) or, if they do not have symptoms, from the day their test was taken.

What about in the New Year and returning to education in January?

We would ask parents/carers to take the same approach you did in September. From the 28th return to your existing support bubble and stick to the Tier rules in BCP. Listen to the news to see if there is any change in how we are asked to behave.

If you have any doubts about symptoms in the run up to school opening please delay a return whilst you get them checked out.

Have and model high standards of safe behaviour for children and routinely wash hands after being in the shops or similar, wearing masks if needed etc. Most schools will have an inbox over the holidays, if you have symptoms or a confirmed case in the second week of the holidays send an email explaining the circumstances and the due end of isolation date.

Follow through any isolation or quarantine you may be asked to do.

Remember New Year will be back to single households. No parties beyond family bubbles or outdoors. This will also be close to when schools re-open and it will be important to explain to older children why it is so important they stick to the rules with friends. They have been wonderful and worked so hard on this.

They need to keep this going a bit longer. Older pupils and students have been great at following rules in school and have also been excellent outside of school as well.

They know how important it is that we protect face to face teaching. However literally in 1 or 2 cases some feel under pressure to meet in larger groups than allowed or have come to school with a symptom. Bubbles are large in secondary phase and just 1 confirmed case can lead to hundreds of pupils who are healthy self-isolating.

Please do not allow those with symptoms to return to school. They will need to self-isolate for 10 days.

Financial and other support for those self-isolating or impacted by Covid or hardship this winter

Some people are eligible for additional [financial support](#) if they need to self-isolate; details of who is eligible and how to access funding is [here](#)

There is specific BCP based support via Community Response and you can access that and much of the national guidance across education, Tier 2 meaning and much more via the BCP [website](#)

Additional specific Christmas food support provided through the community and voluntary sector is available [here](#). You can volunteer to help in the community as well. If you're interested follow this [link](#)

Access to Food map – www.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/accesstofood



Need support?

Our COVID-19 community response helpline is open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday for people in vital need of food and essential household items

0300 1237052

Complete our online form to ask for help →



#TogetherWeCan