

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to you to confirm that Islington's schools are open to all children today, Wednesday 16 December. Our initial advice for schools to move to online learning until the end of term has changed following a discussion with the Department for Education.

On Thursday 17 December, Islington schools will now have an INSET day, and be closed. Friday was to be an INSET / Remote Learning day in any case, so schools will close for teaching at the end of Wednesday, 16 December.

We are both parents and we are all too aware of the disruption caused to you and your families over the last couple of days due to the uncertainty of your children's school opening arrangements, and we are sorry for that.

Our initial advice to schools to close earlier for the final few days of term was not easy. It was taken in light of the worryingly rapid rise in coronavirus cases across the capital, including Islington and the urgent need for us to do all that we can to protect the health of local people.

We have had to make many difficult decisions over the last nine months, but throughout the pandemic our top priority has always been to keep local people safe and supported.

From Wednesday 16 December, London moved into Tier 3, the highest level of coronavirus restrictions. This is yet another indication of how serious things have become and as we move toward the festive break, we must all do everything we can to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe.

Please stay at home as much as possible to help stop the virus spreading. Please avoid crowded spaces, including buses and trains, if you can, as the virus spreads more easily when people mix. Travel or shop at less busy times and follow public health advice to:

- **Make space** – stay two metres apart from people who aren't in your family or bubble - this helps stop the virus spreading between people
- **Wash your hands** - regularly and for at least 20 seconds, especially when you get home – this washes any virus off your hands and helps stop it spreading
- **Cover your nose and mouth with a face covering** to stop the virus spreading - in public places, including in shops, on public transport and at the school gate

If you have symptoms of coronavirus (a high temperature, or a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste), please arrange a test, to help ensure those people that have the virus are identified and we can reduce the risk of further spreading. Getting a test is free and simple: visit [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or **call 119**. Islington has two testing sites - at Sobell Leisure Centre and Finsbury Leisure Centre.

We have all worked incredibly hard to keep one another safe and we urge you to continue to work together and do all that you can to keep each other safe.

With best wishes,

Richard Watts, Leader Islington Council

Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz, Lead Member for
Children and Families

