

Directorate of Adult Social Care and Public Health  
Room 265, Second floor  
Town Hall  
Wandsworth High Street  
London  
SW18 2PU

Dear Parent / Carer

As your local Director of Public Health I would, firstly, like to thank each and every one of you for all the hard work and resilience you have shown as a community of parents and carers over what has been a tremendously difficult and challenging year.

As you know, we are excitedly welcoming the return of pupils to our schools from the 8<sup>th</sup> of March. It has been brought to our attention, that there may be a small number of parents of children currently on the shielding list who unsure whether to send their children back to school on that date.

Although schools have been putting in safety measures to reduce transmission through social distancing, enhanced cleaning and good hygiene, coming into contact with the virus could place children who are clinically extremely vulnerable at a very high risk of serious illness.

In order to continue to protect these children from potential exposure to coronavirus we strongly advise you to continue to shield your child until the guidance changes or you are advised by your doctor or medical profession that they are safe to return to school.

This particular guidance is found within the [Schools Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Operational Guidance](#), released in February this year. Further guidance for parents can be found [here](#), please look at the section on self-isolating and shielding.

*“The advice for pupils who have been confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable is to shield and stay at home as much as possible until further notice. They are advised not to attend school while shielding advice applies nationally”.*

More encouragingly, all 16 to 18 year olds with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality will be offered a vaccine in priority group 6 of the vaccination programme. At present, these children should also continue to shield where requested to do so, and self-isolate if they have symptoms or are identified as a close contact of a positive case, even if they have received the vaccine. You will be contacted by the NHS when it is their turn to be vaccinated.

We appreciate that the request to continue shielding will be disappointing and disheartening for many children who we know are desperate to return to the classroom and to their friends. Please contact your school if you have any queries about your child’s home learning.

We hope the guidance will be reviewed in due course, but this is the best approach to keep them safe for now. We thank both you and them for your enduring patience.

Yours sincerely

**Shannon Katiyo FFPH**

Director of Public Health