

**Please reply to:** Caroline Diamond  
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**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020

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Dear Parent/Carer

As we approach Christmas I want to say thank you to all our children, young people and families. The hard work of our communities to always 'think Covid', reduce social contact, wash hands frequently and wear face coverings when meeting with people outside their homes has played a huge role in reducing rates of COVID-19 in Torbay. But we are not out of the woods yet. There is still more virus circulating than in the summer months and we are expecting the remaining winter months to be our most difficult yet.

Children, young people and their families have been telling me they are confused why children can't play or meet up with their classmates outside of school. I want to answer this directly as it is so important we all understand. To beat the virus we must eliminate as many opportunities for it to spread between people and households as possible. But some things, such as healthcare and your child's education, are so important that we need to find ways to ensure they can continue. We do this by creating COVID-secure environments and by reducing social contact elsewhere. If children and their families meet up outside of school, outside the current restrictions, this increases social contact and opportunities for the virus to spread in non COVID-secure environments and between other members of the family and/or social circle.

With the temporary relaxing of restrictions over the Christmas period and many families planning to meet with loved ones, including those older and more vulnerable to the virus, it is so important we continue to think Covid to keep our families and our communities safe. Keeping your distance and keeping to the restrictions will also help schools to continue to offer face-to-face education for your children and communities with the least disruption possible. This includes self-isolating when appropriate to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and break the chains of transmission. Please, please, this is really important so –please do this to help us

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If you require this in a different format or language, please contact me.



keep COVID-19 out of our bay, our communities and our schools especially now as we don't want to pass Covid on now so people are poorly at Christmas

With recent news coverage about testing I also wanted to remind people how and when to get a COVID-19 test. At the moment we are asking only people with symptoms of COVID-19 to get tested. If someone in your family has symptoms of COVID-19 that person should get tested and the whole household should self-isolate until you know the result. If you are told you are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 you only need to get a test if you also develop symptoms but will always need to follow the isolation advice you have been given.

Once again thank you for all your hard work and wishing you a very safe and Merry Christmas.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Diamond', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Caroline Diamond**

Director of Public Health