

Public Health
Peterborough City Council
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17th December 2020

Dear parents and carers,

This year has been one of the most challenging that many of us have encountered and it has certainly been a testing time for our schools. I am sure, like me, you are thankful for the lengths your school has gone to in order to ensure that children have been able to complete as much of their education as possible.

We know how challenging 2020 has been for you and your children too; from home-schooling to remote learning, to new social distancing and hygiene rules, you have really stepped up to the challenge to help our fantastic school staff ensure disruption to your children's education has been kept to a minimum.

With Covid infection rates still high in Peterborough and rising - and the city moving to tier 3 restrictions from 12.01am on Saturday - I would like to offer you some advice about how you can have a Covid-safe Christmas holiday.

Under the new Tier 3 restrictions, hospitality venues such as pubs, cafes and restaurants must close, offering only takeaway and delivery services.

People must continue to only socialise indoors with those they live with or share a support bubble. People can socialise outdoors in groups of up to six in some public places such as parks, but not in private gardens.

It is essential that your children understand that school 'bubbles' only exist when in school to support children and young people's education. When out of school and in the school holidays, children from different households must follow the same tier 3 rules as the adults in their family. For example they should not visit their school friends' houses, and should only meet outdoors (with not more than six people) in the public spaces that are allowed in tier 3.

There is hope for 2021 with the first groups of people now being vaccinated against Covid-19. But it will take time for the vaccine to reach enough people to make a real difference. So for now, with the city in tier 3 and rates of Covid high, we need everyone to double their efforts to keep themselves and their loved ones safe and to ensure our health services do not become overwhelmed.

Essentially this means that we are asking residents to avoid all non-essential contact with people outside of their household or support bubble.

For Christmas shopping - think about what you can buy at local shops or online, without going into busy shopping centres. And if you are going out Christmas shopping, remember your face mask and hand sanitiser. Keep your distance from others who are shopping, avoid peak times of the day between 12 and 2 when it is most busy and try not to queue close together for shops. Please try and avoid public transport at busy times too – walk or cycle if you can.

I also urge you to think very carefully about your Christmas arrangements between the 23rd and 27th December. Covid is just as infectious at Christmas, and the risk to people who are elderly or vulnerable remains the same. The safest way to spend time with family and friends is either online or on the phone, and the next safest way is to meet outdoors, while maintaining social distancing.

If you do still choose to form a Christmas bubble:

- you should stop unnecessary social contact outside your immediate household as soon as possible and for at least five days before you meet other households in your bubble.
- you should keep your Christmas bubble as small as possible, meet indoors for as short a time as possible, and avoid overnight stays unless absolutely necessary.
- Do not meet with other households in your bubble if anyone in your household has Covid-19 symptoms - your household should self-isolate and the person with symptoms should get a test.

If you do meet indoors at Christmas, try to give each other space and stay 2m apart, wash your hands regularly and open windows for 10-15 minutes every hour or so, to allow good ventilation. You're more likely to catch Covid in poorly ventilated places. Clean all your surfaces, handles and objects that people might touch and have hand sanitiser available for yourself and guests. Try and reduce the number of people in one room, meet in the largest space possible and rearrange furniture to make more space.

Look out for lots of tips, ideas and activities on how to enjoy yourself safely over this period on the council's social media channels.

I know we continue to ask a lot of our residents and the impact on all our lives is immense. There is light at the end of the tunnel, with an effective vaccine which will start to have a real impact in the spring. This is why it is so important that we continue to work together now to stop Covid spreading, and protect vulnerable residents, our NHS and our local businesses and jobs. Thank you for everything you and your family are doing and I wish you a safe and peaceful Christmas.

Kind regards,



Dr Liz Robin FFPH
Director of Public Health for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

