



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Children's Services
Directorate**

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Contact: Joanne Davies

Our ref: 22102020/JL

22 October 2020

Dear Parent / Carers,

Safety During Half Term

October half term is a time for family activities and to enjoy the Autumn period. However, this year is unlike previous years. As you will be aware, St Helens is now subject to Tier 3 regulations which reflects the current level of risks of Covid-19 in our community.

Since September, your school and all schools across the borough have worked hard to continue teaching during challenging circumstances. This has been successful due to the support of the wider school community too. In order to prevent a further rise in Covid-19 locally, I am writing to all parents and carers to ask you to consider the current circumstances when planning your half term activities.

Participation in events is being discouraged to prevent further spread of Covid-19. Parents are advised that attending events carries an increased risk of infection by its nature, with significant and unnecessary social mixing between many different households.

Also, under new Government restrictions, St Helens Borough Council has unfortunately had no option but to cancel its annual Spark in the Park fireworks display. The event attracts a large number of spectators making social mixing and social distancing impossible to maintain.

I understand that this will come as a blow to many of you, however the threat of the virus is very much present and rising across the region. Hospital admission rates are increasing, with Whiston Hospital seeing its number of positive Covid-19 cases doubling over the last couple of weeks. Currently there are over 2,700 children and staff missing from schools in St Helens, due to either suffering from Covid-19 or having to self-isolate because they have come in to contact with a positive case, therefore it is crucial that we get infection rates down in order to minimise the continued impact that this virus is having on our children and young people.

On the run up to Bonfire Night residents may wish to arrange their own fireworks at home but are reminded that fireworks can be extremely dangerous. If you must have fireworks, you are urged to use them safely, with respect and consideration towards neighbours, and without breaking current coronavirus lockdown measures. For firework safety guidance visit www.merseyfire.gov.uk/safety-advice/community-safety/firework-and-sparkler-safety.

Please remember it is currently against the law to meet with members of other households outside of your support or childcare bubble in a home or private garden, as well as restaurants, cafes and all other indoor spaces.

For the latest information on the current restrictions visit www.sthelens.gov.uk/coronavirus.

In place of the traditional activities, St Helens Borough Council has created an online #AwesomeAutumn hub, with a host of activities, safety tips, family crafts and recipes. You can also take part in two live quiz events on Halloween (31st October) and Bonfire Night (5th November) starting at 6pm.

Families can also download and print a series of colouring sheets, which can keep younger children entertained in the spirit of Halloween along with their favourite spooky film. For more information visit the hub at www.sthelens.gov.uk/awesomeautumn.

Tier 3 regulations do also advise that you reduce your number of journeys, and wherever possible avoid travel outside of the Liverpool City Region unless for essential purposes such as to go to work, for education or for caring responsibilities.

I understand that this message will be disappointing for families but for this year, I would ask that you consider how you can celebrate safely within your own household this half term.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

Yours sincerely

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

Jim Leivers
Director of Children's Services