

Thursday 21 October 2021

*To All School Heads*

**Communities & Wellbeing**

**People's Directorate**

West Street House  
West Street Newbury  
Berkshire RG14 1BZ

Dear Parent/Carer

We appreciate everything that your family is doing to protect each other and the school community, and we thank you for that.

We are currently experiencing a large increase in cases across schools in the West Berkshire area and we wanted to share with you some information on how you can protect yourself and your family throughout half term and when schools return in November.

We are asking you again to take care in the way you meet, mix and share space with friends and family. With the darker evenings and colder temperatures, activities and gatherings will naturally be more indoors where it's easier for winter infections to spread.

We would therefore ask you to undertake the following over half-term to minimise transmission both over the holiday period and upon return to school:

- Continue to undertake twice-weekly asymptomatic Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing for all household/family members age 11 and over.
- Book a PCR test for you or your child if you are concerned that either you might have Covid-19 or have had contact with someone with Covid-19. If you don't meet any of the criteria for seeking a PCR test, please tick the box **'I've been told to get a test by my local council, health protection team or healthcare professional.'**
- Any child (primary or secondary) who has a household member test positive for Covid-19 to take a daily LFD test for seven days, in addition to taking a one-off PCR test.
- Any child (primary or secondary) who is identified as a close contact of a positive case via NHS Test and Trace are advised to take a daily LFD test for seven days, in addition to taking a one-off PCR test.
- Secondary school children should undertake a lateral flow test on the day before they return to school.

We also ask you to continue to keep in mind these key elements in the ways to keep safe;

- **Hands** – wash with water and soap or use hand sanitiser regularly.
- **Face** - please try to wear a face covering when in enclosed spaces or large groups of people.
- **Space** – allow as much space and distance between you and others, and try to avoid crowds.
- **Fresh air** - meet friends outdoors or in well-ventilated areas as much as possible will help keep everyone safe.

As we approached half term we took the decision to advise all those attending secondary settings to wear face coverings until the half term break. This will be kept under review, and in line with neighbouring authorities we will initially be asking secondary school children to continue with this for at least the first two weeks after the holiday.

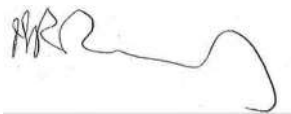
It is likely that cases will remain high after the half-term break, and we will be working with schools over the coming week to review whether any additional measures will be needed as schools return in November. This could mean changes to events such as inter-school activities and larger events where many pupils come together including mixed group assemblies, or increasing how often pupils undertake lateral flow testing.

Thank you again for your support through this challenging time, and we hope you enjoy spending time together with your families over the next week.

Yours sincerely



Matt Pearce  
Service director  
Communities & Wellbeing  
West Berkshire Council



Meradin Peachey  
Director of Public Health  
Berkshire West



Ian Pearson  
Head of Education  
West Berkshire Council