



WALTON HIGH

Leading Learning

Walnut Tree Campus: Fyfield Barrow Milton Keynes MK7 7WH

Brooklands Campus: Fen Street Milton Keynes MK10 7HE

Tel: 01908 677954

www.waltonhigh.org.uk



Executive Principal: Michelle Currie
Principal: Sharon Alexander

Chair of Governors: Ayser Asif
Business Manager: Sukh Singh

21 October 2020

COVID-19 Update 23

Dear Parents

In Update 22, I mentioned that it was only a matter of time before Walton High had a positive case to report given the increased prevalence in the community generally ([Annex A](#)), and specifically within the school's main catchment area ([Annex B](#)). Although the latest data does seem to suggest both are stabilising.

Unfortunately, it is likely that throughout the rest of the autumn term, and possibly well into 2021, students may, from time to time, have to continue their studies from home if they have been in close contact with an infected person.

Face coverings

Although the Department for Education does not generally recommend the use of face coverings in schools, due to the current increased risk of the virus being transmitted at Walton High, from tomorrow, Thursday, 22 October, students will be encouraged to wear a face covering in the corridors and also in social areas when not eating or drinking. After half term this will become compulsory but the need for this measure will be kept under review. Our preference is for students to have a supply of reusable face coverings that can be changed during the day and washed overnight rather than the environmentally unfriendly single use medical type masks. Students must also follow the school's protocol for wearing face coverings ([Annex C](#)) and have their own small bottle of hand sanitiser. Small bottles of sanitiser are available from Student Services for 50p.

Students who are unable to wear a face covering for medical reasons will be exempt. Parents should contact feedback@mket.org.uk to apply for an exemption if this applies to their child.

For now, face coverings will not be compulsory for staff. This is because they often need to be able to communicate clearly with students and wearing a face covering may inhibit their ability to do this as well as cause particular difficulties for our hearing impaired students. Staff will continue to maintain the correct social distancing from each other.

Face coverings will remain optional in lessons.

As I am sure parents appreciate, face coverings have become possibly one of the most contentious virus mitigation measures but regardless of a parent's personal views on their use, we will expect all students to comply unless they are exempt. However, **wearing a face covering is not a substitute for maintaining social distance or compliance with the school's other mitigation measures.**

Social distancing

With all students attending school, it is impossible for them to maintain a social distance in the classroom but we limit the number of contacts they have through the thoughtful use of seating plans. Whereas some schools may have virtually removed social time for some or all of their students, we decided to try and maintain as normal an experience as possible for students. This means each year group has their own area of the café, as well as an indoor and outside social space where they are free to mix with others in their year group if they observe social distancing. The photograph included in my last Update, whilst not a comment on

those particular students, is indicative of the challenges staff on duty face. By maintaining a social distance from others, students can reduce the possibility of them needing to self-isolate for 14 days and all the disruption this entails for their education, family and social life. Even if students have been wearing a face covering, if they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive they will need to self-isolate for 14 days and this may occur more than once if they do not keep their distance.

Students with mild symptoms

Schools have reported that in young people, COVID-19 often begins with very mild symptoms such as headache, upset stomach, slightly increased temperature or occasional cough. Understandably, especially at this time of year, parents have still sent their children to school only for them to test positive a few days later. This has resulted in schools having to send home many more students than would otherwise be necessary.

To help prevent the spread of the disease in school, and to minimise disrupting other people's lives, it is important that parents only send their children to school if they are well. Parents with any concerns that their child may have COVID-19, should keep them home and book a test immediately rather than wait a few days to see how things develop.

Communicating test results

We are very grateful to parents who have advised the Attendance Office that their child is self-isolating because they, or someone in the family, has symptoms that might be COVID-19 and a test has been booked. Please remember to let the school know the outcome of the test as soon as possible, even if it is negative.

To enable us to respond quickly to any **positive case** of COVID-19, we have set up a dedicated email address that will be monitored out of hours. The address is covid19@mket.org.uk. In your email notifying us of a **positive case**, please provide the following information:

1. Child's name
2. Campus
3. Year and Tutor Group
4. Date symptoms started
5. Test date
6. Test result date
7. Name(s) of Walton High students the child has had close contact with during break and lunch since showing symptoms and in the 48 hours before symptoms began
8. Name(s) of Walton High students the child has had close contact with outside of school within the 48 hours of first showing symptoms
9. Name and best contact number of person reporting the positive case

In the event of a positive result, it would be helpful if parents could ensure that the results are not shared with other students during the school day to enable us time to determine what action needs to be taken and to identify close contacts. This will help prevent other students and/or parents becoming unduly worried.

Self-isolation notices

For the first case we reported, although the school notified parents of the need for their child to self-isolate on the Friday evening, some of these students still came to school the following Monday. This was either because the parent had not read the email the school sent or, because it had come from an individual member of staff's email account, it had ended up in the junk folder. As the school can be notified of a positive case at any time during the day, it may mean there is a skeleton staff working out of office hours identifying close contacts of the infected person and sending out self-isolation notifications. These colleagues may not be able to send the usual Group Call email, so exceptionally may send the emails from their own accounts. We therefore ask parents to add the domain **@mket.org.uk** to their safe sender list to minimise the risk of

important emails from the school being missed. We also urge parents to read any letters we send as soon as possible.

In addition to notifying parents by email that their child needs to self-isolate, we will also try to call parents. Please make sure you let us know if there is a change to your contact details.

Classroom desks

At the beginning of the year rooms were set out to ensure that students sat at least two metres from the teacher's area. However, due to the size of the classrooms, this leaves little space for students to get in and out from behind their desks. Although there were marks on the floor, over time the tape has come off and the desks gradually migrated forward thus compromising the two metre exclusion zone. To prevent this happening again, the tape indicating two metres is now on the wall and/or window so teachers can ensure that the front desks are always at least two metres way. This means should any teacher test positive in the future, there will be no need for any students to self-isolate.

PE kit

At the beginning of the year I advised that we would not be lending PE kit to those students who "forgot" theirs which has resulted in some students being unable to participate. As PE is such an important part of the curriculum, which makes a positive contribution to both a young person's physical and mental health, we have amended this policy to ensure nobody misses out. If a student forgets their kit, and their parent is unable to drop it off before the lesson, they will now be given spare kit to wear. At the end of the day the student will be required to stay behind to wash the kit they have borrowed, which will then be tumble dried.

Students have also been reminded that they should take their own kit home after every PE and/or Dance lesson so it may be washed. Due to the fabric used, these clothes will dry quickly overnight.



Students have fed back to staff that they would like to be able to wear a lightweight rain jacket during their PE lessons in inclement weather. Depending on the nature of the lesson planned, the teacher may allow students to wear a plain black kagool, similar to the one illustrated, which can be purchased from online retailers for under £10. Any hood should either be detachable or capable of folding away into the collar. The school will not be responsible for any damage to the jacket.

When the weather turns colder, students may also wear a plain white, black or burgundy base layer if they feel the cold.

Half term

The small number of cases in recent days needs to be kept in perspective, as Walton High has over 2,500 students on roll the number of positive cases represents just 0.1% of the student body. With the mitigation measures we have in place, Walton High continues to be a safe place for both students and staff.

We all need to do our bit to minimise the disruption to young people's learning, family life and the local economy by following the rules and minimising social contact with people outside our household. This will be especially important when the temptation over half term might be for young people to have friends visit and spend extended periods of time in close proximity. As a community we could create our own mini "circuit breaker" by ensuring that households mixed as little as possible over the break allowing for a fresh start in November.

And finally . . .

Ms Alexander and I should like to record our enormous gratitude to our colleagues who have given us tremendous support and continue to work tirelessly to ensure their students, your children, receive the very best education possible in these challenging times. We are also extremely grateful for the ongoing support we receive from parents. Thank you.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Currie". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Michelle Currie
Executive Principal

Annex A

20 October 2020 at 4:18pm

Cases in Milton Keynes ▾

Cases data are available for **nations**, **regions** and **local authorities**. ✕

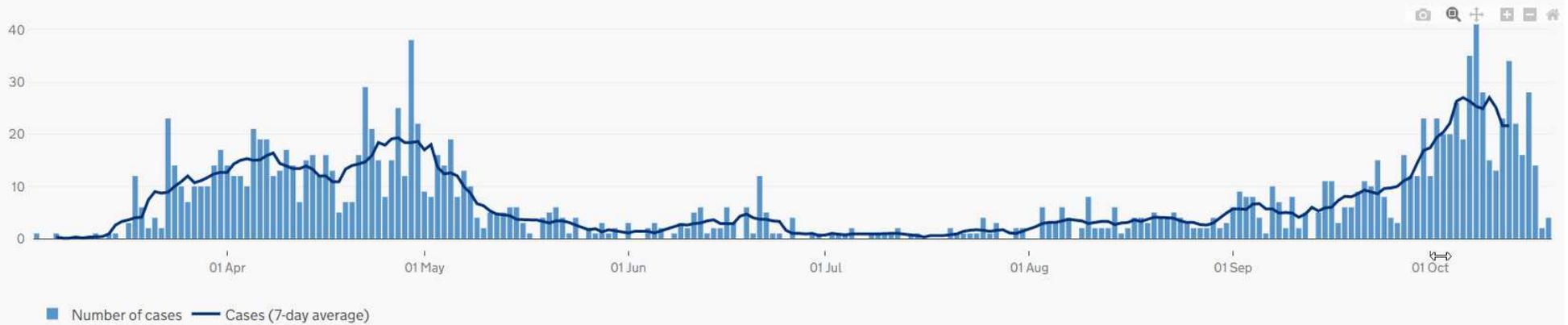
People tested positive

Daily Total
22 1,610

Cases by specimen date

Number of people with at least one lab-confirmed positive COVID-19 test result, by specimen date. Individuals tested positive more than once are only counted once, on the date of their first positive test.

Daily Cumulative Data About

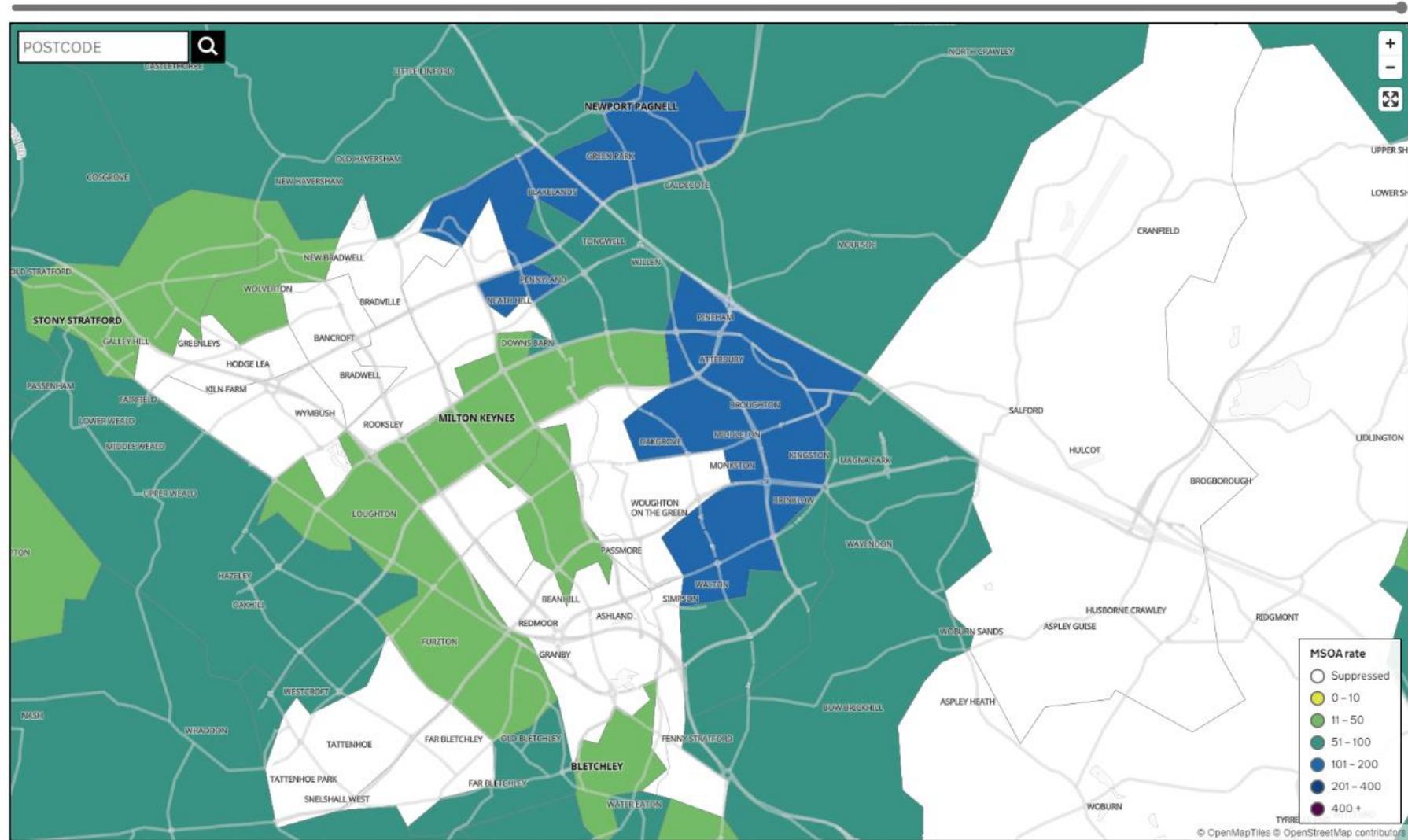


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Annex B

Seven-day rolling rate of new cases by specimen date ending on **15 Oct 2020**



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Annex C



Walton High's Protocol for wearing a face covering

The Government states that evidence suggests wearing a face covering does not protect the person wearing the mask. However, if the wearer is infected but has not yet developed symptoms, it may provide some protection for those they come into close contact with.

Students and staff using a face covering must comply with the following protocol:

1. A face mask must cover the mouth and nose whilst allowing the wearer to breathe comfortably
2. Before putting the face covering on, the wearer must wash their hands or use hand sanitiser
3. People wearing a face covering should avoid touching the mask, their eyes, nose, or mouth at all times
4. Before removing the face covering, the wearer must wash their hands or use hand sanitiser
5. Single use face coverings must be disposed of in a plastic bag that is tied closed and disposed of in a bin - a nappy or dog poo bag is ideal for this purpose
6. Reusable face coverings should be washed between use and stored in a closable plastic bag until it has been washed - a zipped sandwich bag that can be cleaned between use is ideal for this purpose
7. Those using a reusable face covering that has a filter, such as a paper towel, should dispose of the filter in the same manner as a single use mask
8. After removing the face covering, the wearer must wash their hands or use hand sanitiser