



# 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](http://www.waltonhigh.org.uk)



Executive Principal: Michelle Currie  
Principal: Sharon Alexander

Chair of Governors: Ayser Asif  
Business Manager: Sukh Singh

16 November 2020

## COVID-19 Update 25

Dear Parents

### 2021 GCSE and A level exams

I have no doubt that students in Year 11 and Year 13 have followed with interest the cancellation of the summer 2021 GCSE equivalent exams in Scotland and the GCSE and A level exams in Wales. However, despite COVID-19 not having the same impact on students across schools, or even within a school (see below), there is no indication that England will follow this lead. Regardless of whether we think this is fair and just, it is what we have to work towards.

Some minor concessions to the ongoing disruption students have experienced since March have been made. The summer exam season in 2021 has been put back by three weeks and will now run from 7 June to 2 July but some courses with low entry numbers and one English (26 May) and Maths (27 May) paper will be sat shortly before May half term (26 and 27 May respectively). There have also been minor changes to some GCSE courses. Teachers will explain to their students what these changes mean for them.

Results days have been moved to the 24 and 27 August for A Level and GCSE respectively.

To ensure the grades they achieve in the summer exams reflect their true abilities, students should remain focused on their studies in the expectation that exams will go ahead.

### Post-16 applications

Our preparations for welcoming the 2021 intake into Walton High's Post-16 in 2021 are well underway but, due to current restrictions, our usual Open Evening will not take place. Instead, a range of other activities is planned to ensure students have a thorough understanding of the range of Level 3 academic, technical and vocational courses on offer.

Walton High's Post-16 not only offers the widest range of subjects locally; it is also the highest achieving provider for academic qualifications. In September 2021 we expect to offer a range of courses on both campuses that make use of staff expertise and specialist facilities. Details are in the latest prospectus <https://waltonhigh.org.uk/ProspectusPost16-2021.pdf>.

### Impact of COVID-19

Many of you will have seen reports in the local press concerning some secondary schools in Milton Keynes having to send home whole year groups in recent days. I therefore thought it timely to update parents on the impact COVID-19 was having at Walton High.

### Staff attendance

The table below shows the number of staff who have been off for COVID-19 related reasons since the beginning of term. This is usually because they have needed to self-isolate either because they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive or they have been waiting for a test result which, other than the cases notified to parents, has fortunately been negative.

	Brooklands		Walnut Tree	
	Number of staff	Days lost	Number of staff	Days lost
Teachers	11	45	19	38
Support	11	52	10	38.5

In comparison to other schools, one of which has had 27 teachers self-isolating at the same time, Walton High has been very fortunate and has not needed to keep students off school due to staff shortages.

Ms Alexander and I are enormously grateful for the commitment and dedication of teaching and support staff who have covered for absent colleagues in addition to their already increased workload. We would not be able to manage without the brilliant team of colleagues we have supporting us throughout the school.

### Number of students who have had to self-isolate

The following table shows the number of students by campus and year group who have needed to self-isolate. The total number equates to about 25% of students but these occasions have been spread out over the past 10 weeks.

Year	Brooklands			Walnut Tree		
	Once (up to 14 days)	Twice (up to 28 days)	Thrice or more ( >28 days)	Once (up to 14 days)	Twice (up to 28 days)	Thrice or more ( >28 days)
7	63	1	0	34	2	0
8	71	4	1	49	4	0
9	74	6	0	56	1	1
10	31	3	0	31	0	0
11	58	1	1	64	3	1
12	1	0	0	21	0	0
13	5	0	0	37	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>

Whilst off, students have been able to continue their learning online and have also received pastoral and/or learning support as appropriate to their needs. Feedback from students and parents on the quality of provision has been very positive and any criticisms constructive and welcomed as this has helped us make further improvements.

### Social distancing

The incidence of COVID-19 in the community has increased significantly in recent weeks, although within the school's defined area it continues to be below the national average ([Annex A](#)).

The prevalence of the virus and the need to self-isolate (with all the inconvenience this brings) if a close contact of someone who tests positive, reinforces the importance of us all abiding by social distancing rules – even if the Prime Minister doesn't!

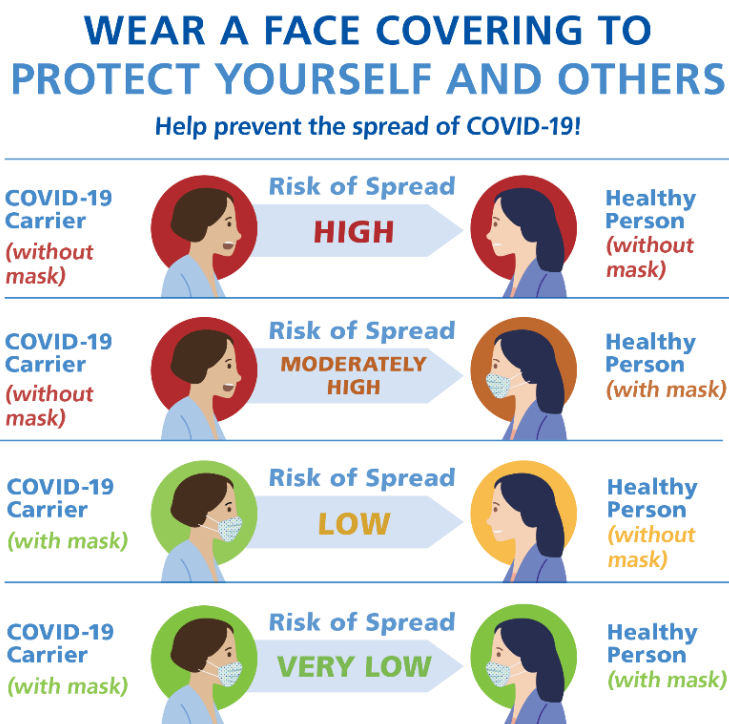
Whilst on site most students are mindful of the need to keep a social distance where possible. However, from observations, very few are doing so on the way to or from school. This is especially the case if they walk or travel by public bus.

A recent report again highlighted that BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) people appear to be at greater risk of both contracting and being serious ill from the virus. Across both campuses, about 40% of our students come from BAME communities so it is a particular concern for the school. Other risk factors are being overweight/obese, male and older.

Whilst we will continue to reinforce the message in school, **we ask parents to speak to their children again about the importance of social distancing**, especially if any of the increased risk factors apply to your family.

### Face coverings

Staff on both campuses are reassured by the number of students who are wearing face coverings in corridors and social spaces and are grateful to the vast majority of parents who are supportive of this policy. The graphic below illustrates clearly the importance of wearing a face covering and the protection it gives.



Given COVID-19 is a disease that attacks the lungs, most students with asthma also wear a face covering to wisely protect themselves and others. Asthma UK offers some helpful advice on wearing face coverings for people who suffer from asthma ([Annex B](#)).

Given the increased chance a person not wearing a face covering has of contracting the virus, this will be taken into account if a student has been in a corridor or social space with a person who tests positive. This means that students not wearing a face covering may have an increased likelihood of being required by the school to self-isolate for 14 days to ensure the rest of the wider school community is protected.

The fact that Walton High has not yet had a significant outbreak of the virus is not only good fortune but also testament to the extent to which most families and staff are limiting social contacts and abiding by the rules. To protect the education of our students, your children, we all need to persevere until the virus is under control.

Thank you for all you are doing to ensure Walton High remains open to all students.

Kind regards

Michelle Currie  
Executive Principal

# Annex A

Cases in [Milton Keynes](#) ▾

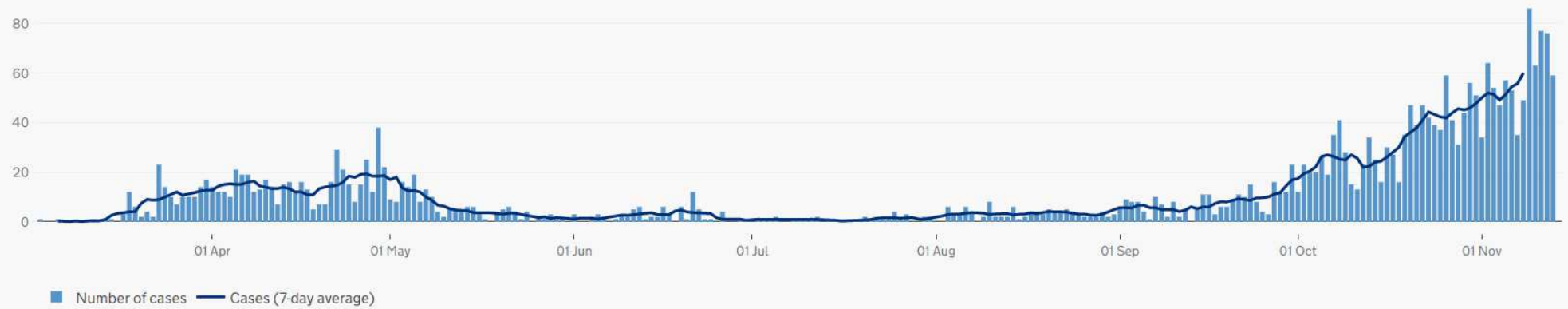
## People tested positive

Daily	Total
<u>97</u>	<u>2,960</u>

## Cases by specimen date

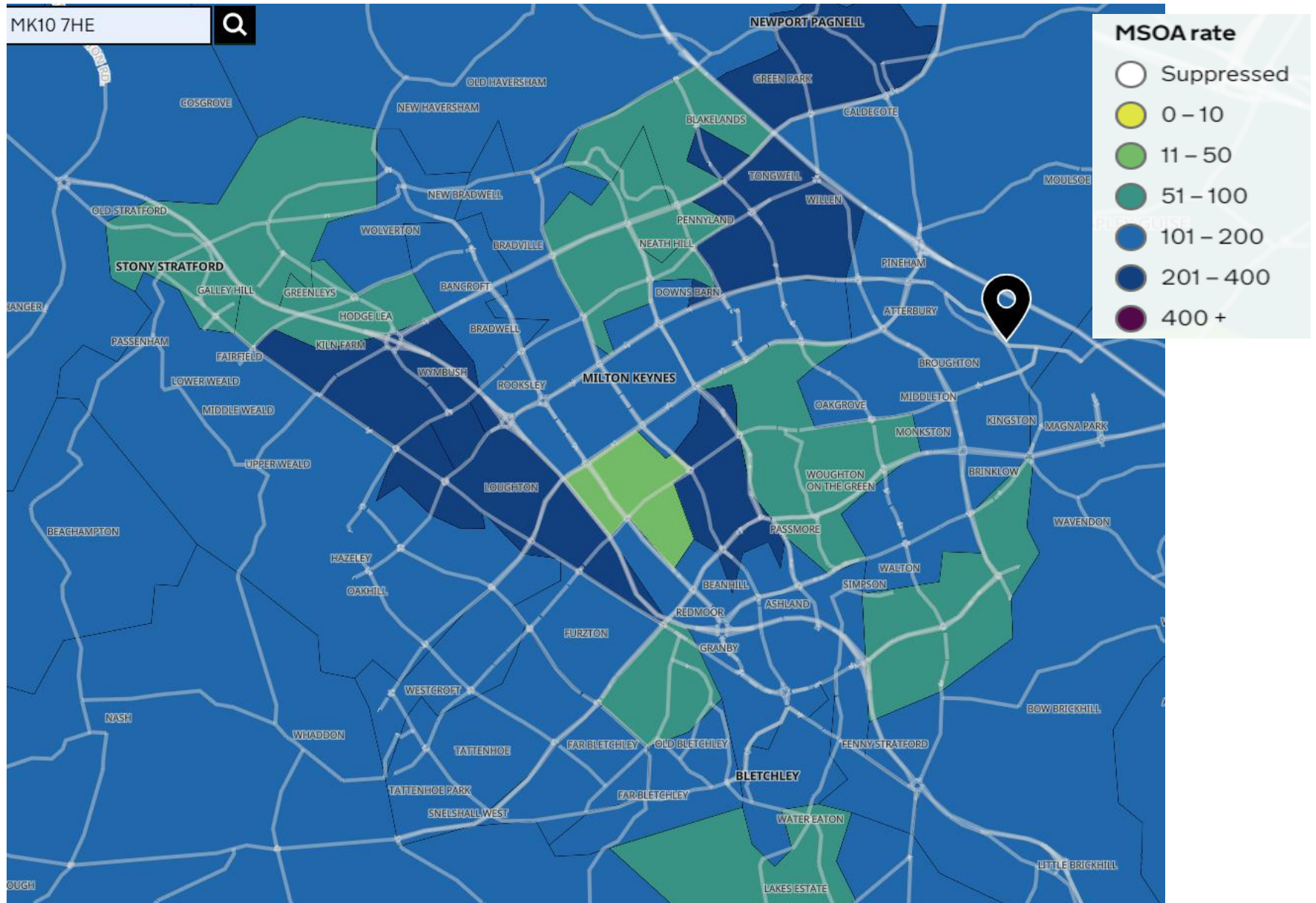
Number of people with at least one positive COVID-19 test result (either lab-reported or lateral flow device), by specimen date. Individuals tested positive more than once are only counted once, on the date of their first positive test.

[Daily](#) [Cumulative](#) [Data](#) [About](#)



Walton High is operated by Milton Keynes Education Trust which is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales. Company number 7663689. The Registered Office is at Walton High, Fyfield Barrow, Milton Keynes, MK7 7WH

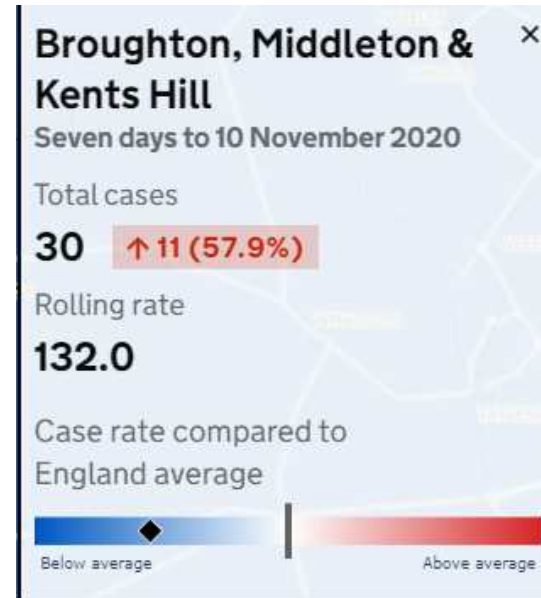
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#### Cases

### People tested positive in Milton Keynes

Latest data at local authority (upper tier) level provided on 15 November 2020

Daily

97

Last 7 days

490 ↑ 145 (42.0%)

▶ Rate per 100k resident population: 144.7

[All cases data in Milton Keynes](#)

[Easy-read report for Milton Keynes](#)

#### Deaths

### Deaths within 28 days of positive test in Milton Keynes

Latest data at local authority (upper tier) level provided on 15 November 2020

Daily

1

Last 7 days

3 ↓ -1 (-25.0%)

[All deaths data in Milton Keynes](#)

[Easy-read report for Milton Keynes](#)

#### Healthcare

### Patients admitted in East of England

Latest data at healthcare region level provided on 12 November 2020

Daily

127

Last 7 days

624 ↑ 149 (31.4%)

▶ Rate per 100k resident population: 9.6

[All healthcare data in East of England](#)

[Easy-read report for East of England](#)

# Annex B

## Advice on the Asthma UK website

### **Do I have to wear a face covering if I have asthma?**

**Most people with asthma, even if it's severe, can manage to wear a face mask for a short period of time, and shouldn't worry if they need to wear one.** Wearing a mask does not reduce a person's oxygen supply or cause a build-up of carbon dioxide. You may have read stories that say that it can, but this isn't true.

Some people with asthma tell us that face coverings can make breathing feel more difficult, which might be uncomfortable. It's a good idea to try wearing a face covering at home, or on a short walk around the block first. It might not feel comfortable straight away, so give it a chance.

You can also experiment with different types of mask – some are easier to wear than others. Sometimes the feeling of wearing a face mask might take a bit of getting used to, but trying different types and starting with short periods of time can help you feel more comfortable.