



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

3 January 2021

COVID-19 Update 29

Dear Parents

It is clear that the Government's assertion in December that schools would fully reopen in the first week of January was yet another example of decision making based on how Ministers would like the world to be rather than the reality. I suspect that the latest statements advising that secondary schools will open fully on 18 January are likely to be just as unreliable. Walton High will continue to plan for all eventualities and keep parents informed of changes with as much notice as possible.

BTEC and CTEC exams

We fully appreciate that this continues to be a very difficult time for all our students but especially those in Post 16 and Year 11. The external BTEC/CTEC module exams scheduled for January will go ahead as scheduled and Mr Bennett, Vice Principal with responsibility for this area, will be emailing students on Monday to reassure them and set out the support we have in place to enable them to do their best.

Computers and internet access

With the return of remote learning for most students, we will again be making available PCs and laptops for home use to ensure all students are able to access their lessons. If you have made use of this offer in the past, there is no need to contact us again as we will already have your details. However, if you have not had a computer in the past, please contact the school via the feedback@mket.org.uk email address and we will be in touch to discuss your child's needs.

We will aim to deliver or arrange the collection of devices by Friday, 8 January at the latest.

In addition to providing a PC or laptop, we are now also able to request an increasing in data allowances on mobile devices to support disadvantaged children in certain circumstances.

This scheme temporarily increases data allowances for mobile phone users on certain networks. This is so that children and young people can access remote education if their face-to-face education is disrupted.

Who can get help

Schools can request mobile data increases for children and young people who:

- do not have fixed broadband at home
- cannot afford additional data for their devices
- are experiencing disruption to their face-to-face education

Children with access to a mobile phone on one of the following networks might be able to benefit:

- Three
- Virgin Mobile
- Tesco Mobile
- Smarty
- EE
- Sky Mobile

Other providers may join the scheme at a later stage.

If you believe your child meets the criteria set out above, and would like to take advantage of this additional support, please contact the school via the feedback@mket.org.uk email address with "Internet access" as the subject.

We also have access to small supply of 4G routers and may be able to request additional devices for students unable to access the mobile phone data scheme.

Asymptomatic testing of staff and students in school

As mentioned in Updates 27 and 28, schools have been asked to set up a programme of asymptomatic testing for staff and students.

As [Annex A](#) shows, the virus continues to circulate widely in the local community. Many of the positive cases in students that we have been advised of over the holiday were in families that had wisely taken up the local public health team's offer of household testing. Most of the young people who tested positive were asymptomatic.

It is clear that even with the mitigation measures secondary schools have in place, they are settings in which the virus spreads. It is also the case that a significant number of young people have no symptoms and are therefore unwittingly contributing to the surge in cases. As the new variant is 50 - 70% more transmissible than the first variant, to keep Walton High and the wider community as safe as possible, we need to identify as many asymptomatic carriers of COVID-19 as possible.

The systematic use of Lateral Flow tests will help keep Walton High open and reduce the number of students needing to self-isolate with all the disruption this brings to their education and lives. It will also help to keep staff, students and their families safe and has the potential to save lives.

The video in the link below explains how the Lateral Flow tests work.

<https://twitter.com/10DowningStreet/status/1328387524490911745?s=20>

Although the Lateral Flow tests are nowhere near as reliable at detecting the virus as claimed in the Government's information (when used for mass testing in Liverpool, research suggests they only detected about 50% of cases), by agreeing to your child taking part, your family will be doing its bit to help the school and wider community be safer places. Even if we only identify half the asymptomatic positive staff and students, this is clearly better than none.

To get an understanding of what is involved, the Senior Team has completed the online training modules and it is all very straight forward. **All tests will be self-administered** but we will need to recruit additional staff on a casual basis to help meet and greet students as they arrive at our test centres (which will be the sports hall at both campuses) and to process the tests.

To lead the processing part of the test centres at each campus, two of the school's science technicians will be redeployed to oversee compliance with health and safety regulations and quality assure the processing of tests. As a minimum we aim to have the capacity to test nine people at a time at Walnut Tree and at Brooklands we are aiming for six. This is proportionate to the number of people based at each site.

We believe that the processing and greeting roles will create excellent paid work experience opportunities for our Post-16 students, especially those studying the sciences and Health and Social Care. The Director of Post-16, Ms Read, will be writing to students about this opportunity on Monday. Mr Mapesa, Director of Science, will be responsible for overseeing the training of recruits and only if a person successfully passes the training will they be employed.

In addition to Post-16 students, it is likely that we will still need additional staff depending on the number of tests that need to be conducted at any particular time. If parents know of anyone who might be interested in this role, who needs to be reliable and able to work flexibly at short notice, then please ask them to email hr@mket.org.uk with their details.

As those of us who have already carried out a self-test know, it is a little uncomfortable but is worth the discomfort if in return you potentially help prevent serious illness or even the death of others. The attached leaflet shows what a person has to do when carrying out a self-test. Please discuss this with your child(ren).

After registering with the NHS for the first test (if not already registered), the whole process should take no more than five minutes.

Having considered the information provided, if you, or your child if over 16, are willing to give consent to take part in this programme, please do the following:

- Save the attached consent form using the following file name format: SURNAME_FIRSTNAME, so mine will be saved as: CURRIE_MICHELLE
- Complete the form providing all the information requested
- Send the completed form to c19testing@mket.org.uk putting "Test consent form" as the subject
- Keep a copy of your completed consent form

A separate consent form is needed for each child.

A privacy notice that explains how any data collected will be used is also attached.

If you (or your child if over 16) do not give consent for your child to take part in the testing programme, please also email c19testing@mket.org.uk giving the following information:

- Child(ren)'s name(s)
- Year/Tutor Group

Please put "Consent not given" in the subject line.

The deadline for letting us know whether or not you give consent to your child participating in the asymptomatic testing programme is 17:00 on Wednesday, 6 January. Please accept our apologies for the need for a quick turnaround but the timeframe has been set by others.

If we have not heard from you by the deadline, a member of staff will contact you to discuss.

We need to know if you do not give consent so staff resource is not wasted following up non-returns.

Please remember, this programme is entirely voluntary and consent may be withdrawn at any time.

The programme aims to do the following:

- Test all staff (for whom we have consent) twice in the week before students return and then weekly thereafter
- Test all the key worker and vulnerable children (for whom we have consent) who are onsite twice during the first week
- Test all students (for whom we have consent) in Y11 and Y13 twice during their first week back
- Test all students (for whom we have consent) in Y7, Y8, Y9, Y10 and Y12 before they return to school
- Test any students or staff (for whom we have consent) who are close contacts of a positive case for seven consecutive school days to remove the need for them to self-isolate

Although this is a very ambitious programme, we would still like as many people as possible to participate because of the public benefit that will be derived if successful. I am enormously proud that the overwhelming majority of staff have given their consent and I hope this level of support is also reflected in the uptake we received from parents and students. As mentioned in previous Updates, we can only keep families safe with your support.

Once we know the number of students for whom we have consent, I will write again with further details.

And finally . . .

I should like to put on record my enormous thanks to the Senior Team for continuing to work on Test and Trace at the beginning of the school holiday and for the work they have done on planning and preparing for mass testing at the end of the holiday.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy 2021.

Kind regards



Michelle Currie
Executive Principal



Annex A

2 January 2021 at 3:30pm

Cases in [Milton Keynes](#) ▾

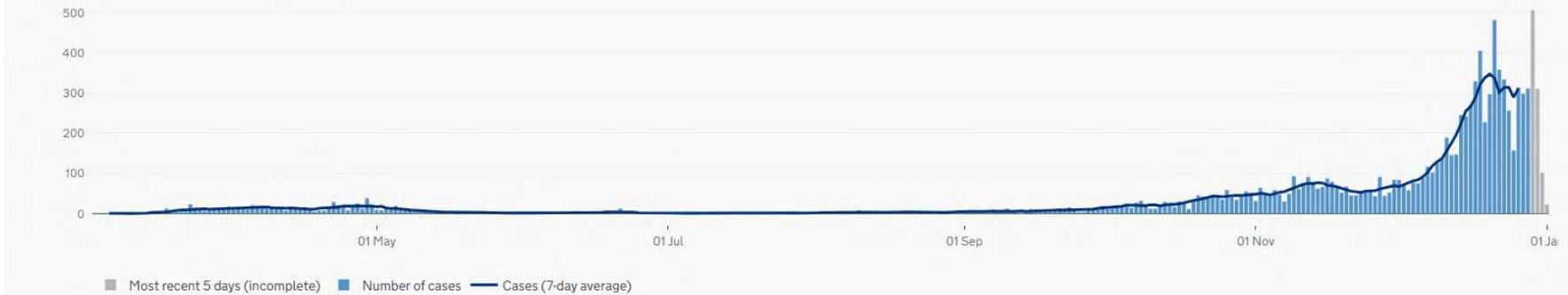
People tested positive

Daily Total
348 **10,833**

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. Data for the period ending 5 days before the date when the website was last updated with data for the selected area, highlighted in grey, is incomplete.

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



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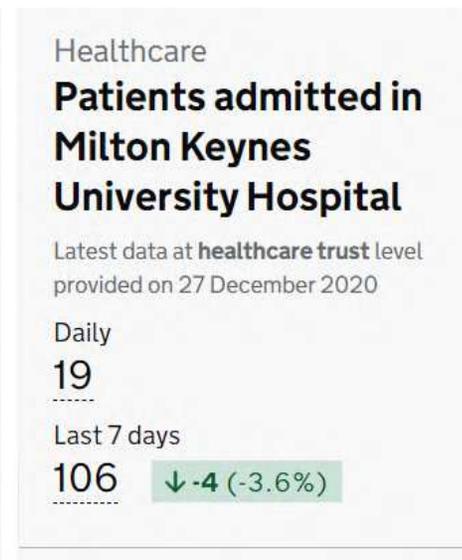
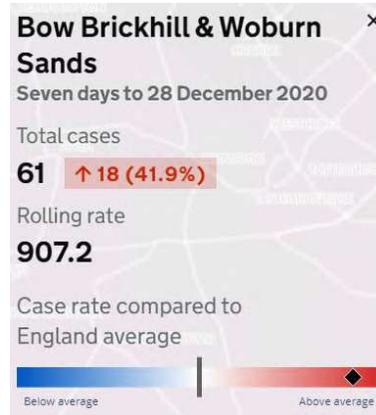
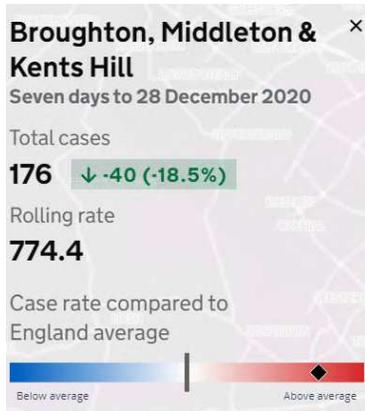
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Seven-day rolling rate of new cases by specimen date ending on 28 Dec 2020



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