



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

5 March 2021

COVID-19 Update 34

Dear Parents

Our 360° reviews of every student's needs are progressing well, as are preparations for welcoming students back over the course of next week. Thank you for your engagement and support.

Asymptomatic testing

As you will be aware from Update 33, the aim is for students to self-test in school three times, three to five days apart. Our highly talented Post-16 students are taking a leading role in the school's testing centres and to help alleviate any concerns younger students may have, they have produced this short video.

<https://youtu.be/S6eerWGweyQ>

Parents are asked to share this with their child(ren) and discuss what is involved before they return to school. As you will see from the video, there is absolutely no reason for students to feel anxious and people will be on hand to support them should they need help.

Many thanks to Mr Mapesa, Director of Science, and Mr Coates, Assistant Principal KS3, for their leadership of Walton High's on-site testing and the team of processors who will provide this service to staff and students. I am also very grateful to Ms Wylde, Administrative Manager, and the Admin Team for their work on following up non-replies from parents and pre-registering the onsite tests to help speed the process next week.

One of the aims of the on-site testing is to help students get used to the process of self-testing to prepare them for testing at home.

The link to the video below, and the leaflet that accompanies this letter, shows what is involved in home testing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9XR8RZxkNo&list=PLvaBZskxS7tzQYIVg7lwH5uxAD9UrSzGJ>

We appreciate it might not be easy for all families to carry out twice weekly testing at home. Walton High will therefore continue to provide on-site testing for those who would prefer to have one or both weekly tests carried out at school.

In order for us to plan for the distribution of home testing kits later this month, and to calculate how many testing bays we will need to retain at each campus, **please complete the feedback form for each of your children.**

http://bit.ly/WH_Testing_Pref

The form only takes a couple of minutes to complete and asks you to select from the following options:

- Both tests to be carried out at home
- One test at home one at school
- Both tests carried out at school
- Will not take part in testing

The form should be completed by **Friday, 12 March**.

What to do if your child has symptoms

On-site and home testing are only to be used by people who have no symptoms. Feedback from parents and staff who have recently been diagnosed with COVID-19 have indicated that a headache and/or a sore throat were often the first symptoms. If your child has any of the usual COVID-19 symptoms or a severe headache or sore throat, please **do not send them to school**. A PCR test should be booked via the NHS as these are more sensitive and accurate than the lateral flow tests used in school and at home.

Parents should continue to inform the school of suspected and confirmed cases in their household.

Asymptomatic Lateral Flow testing for households and bubbles of school students

The Department of Health and Social Care announced that [all households with children of school age can test themselves twice a week at home](#) as schools open to all students from next Monday. This means that parents can access home testing kits for everyone in their household and support bubbles.

Twice-weekly testing will also be offered to adults working in the wider school community, including bus drivers and after school club leaders.

The twice-weekly test kits can be accessed:

- via employers - if they offer testing to their employees
- at a local test site
- by collecting a home test kit from a test site
- by ordering a home test kit online

[Rapid lateral flow testing for households and bubbles of school pupils and staff](#) provides further information about who can be tested and how to get a test.

Unfortunately, schools are not allowed to provide parents with testing kits allocated to the school for use by students and staff. However, as testing is an important strategy in breaking chains of transmission, parents are strongly encouraged to take up this offer to help protect the local community.

Why has the Government extended the use of face coverings to classrooms?

The Government has extended the use of face coverings for two main reasons. Firstly, most people with COVID-19 now have the new UK variant which is more virulent than the earlier version. This means it is easier to catch the disease than before. Secondly, allowing all schools to open at once rather than in a phased way increases the risk of another spike in cases nationally. The use of face coverings in classrooms is an attempt to reduce the likelihood of this happening.

It is very much hoped that this is a temporary measure and that students will not be required to wear these in lessons after Easter.

I have not yet come across a person who likes wearing a face covering. As Her Majesty The Queen said recently in relation to having the vaccine, people should think about others rather than oneself. The same

sentiment applies to wearing face coverings and testing. With everyone playing their part, the sooner we will all get to a position where face coverings in school are no longer needed anywhere.

I again thank parents and students for supporting the measures in place and putting the interests of everyone before their own personal preferences or minor discomfort.

Does my child have to wear a face covering if they have asthma?

The advice of the Asthma UK website states that most people with asthma, even if it's severe, can manage to wear a face mask, and shouldn't worry if they need to wear one. It also clarifies that wearing a mask does not reduce a person's oxygen supply nor cause a build-up of carbon dioxide as claimed in fake news circulating on the internet.

There isn't a blanket rule about face covering exemptions for everyone with asthma and it is the interests of students with this condition to do all they can to mitigate the risk of contracting COVID-19 because of how the disease affects the lungs.

If my child has tested negative, why do they have to wear a face covering and follow social distancing rules?

One of the biggest risks associated with the testing programme is that it might give people a false sense of security. The lateral flow tests are not 100% accurate so it is possible for someone to test negative when they are in fact positive. If these people failed to follow all the other mitigation measures the school has in place, there is an even greater risk that they will pass the disease on to somebody else who is more vulnerable which might have serious, or even fatal, consequences.

My child has had COVID-19, why do they have to wear a face covering and follow social distancing rules?

The extent to which having had, or been vaccinated against, COVID-19 protects an individual and stops them being able to pass on the disease to others is still unclear. This is especially the case given the emergence of new variants. For this reason, people who have had COVID-19, and those fortunate enough to have been vaccinated, are obliged to continue to observe all the mitigation measures the school has in place to protect themselves and others.

Arrangements for returning to school

As previously advised, Walton High is reopening to all students in a phased way to allow for the testing of students.

The date and time students should return to school are set out in Update 33 [COVID-19 Update 33 24 02 2021.pdf \(waltonhigh.org.uk\)](#)

And finally . . .

Staff at Walton High are very much looking forward to welcoming back all students next week. We share the sense of weariness with the ongoing restrictions to our way of life and the desire to return to a more normal way of living as soon as possible. This will be achieved more quickly with everyone playing their part.

Thank you for your continued support.



Michelle Currie
Executive Principal



Annex A

3 March 2021 at 7:15pm

Cases in Milton Keynes

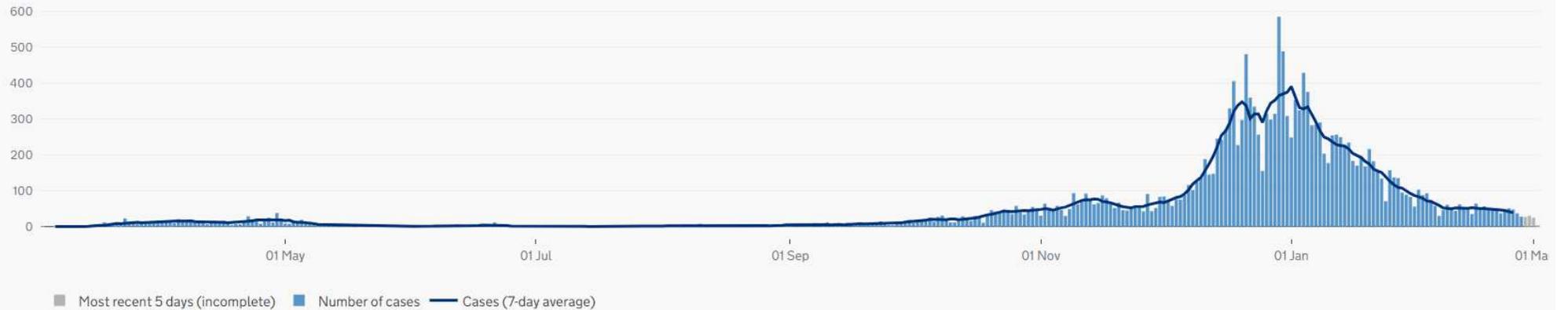
People tested positive

Daily	Total
16	19,184

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.

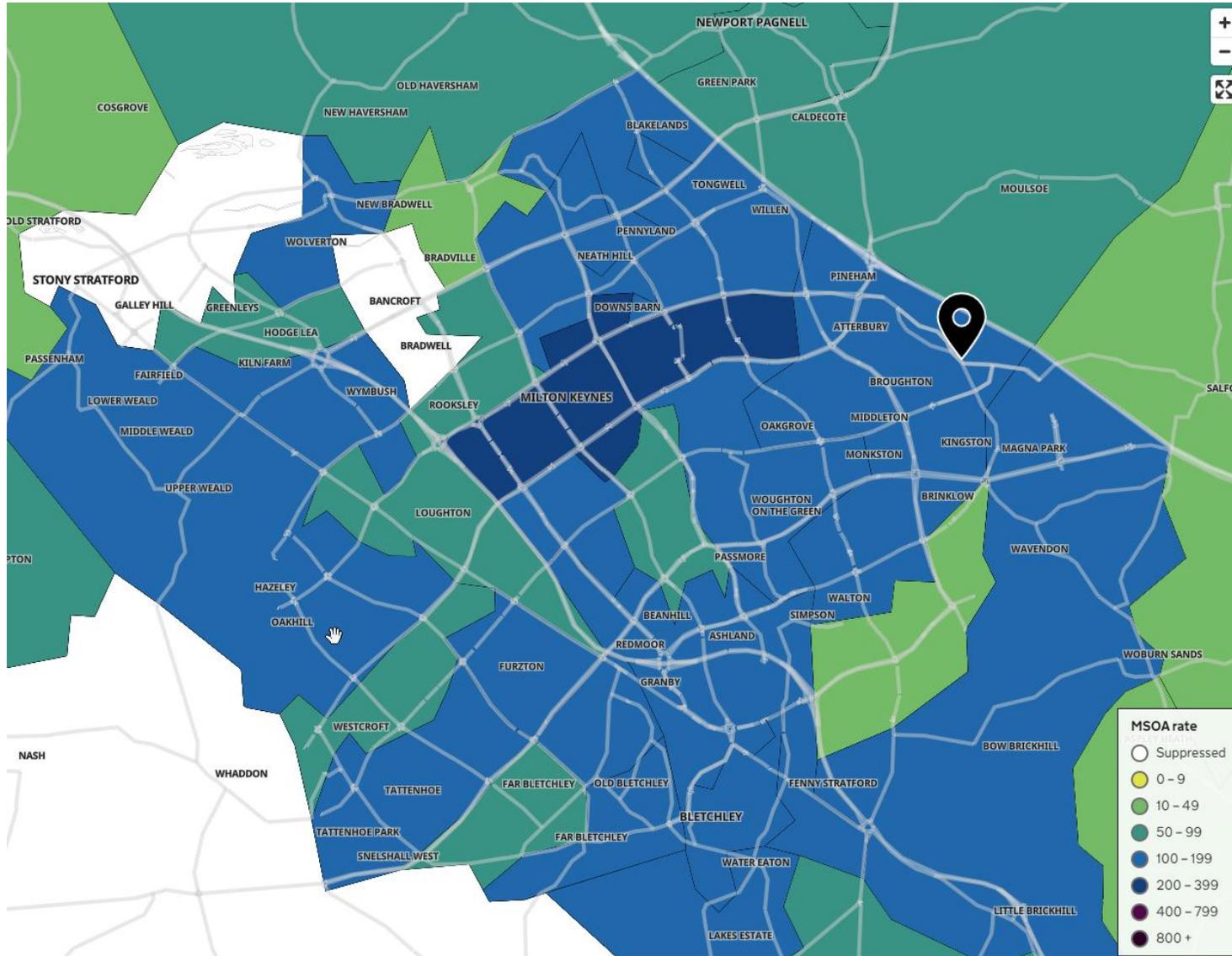
[Daily](#) [Cumulative](#) [Data](#) [About](#)



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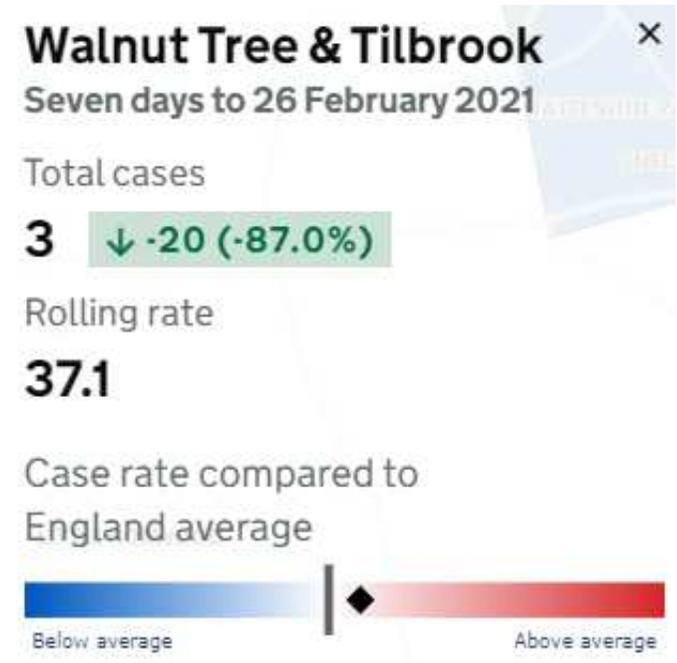
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Seven-day rolling rate of new cases by specimen date ending on 26 February 2021



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Cases

People tested positive in Milton Keynes

Latest data at **local authority (upper tier)** level provided on 3 March 2021

Daily

16

Last 7 days

257 ↓ -66 (-20.4%)

▶ Rate per 100k resident population: **109.9**

Deaths

Deaths within 28 days of positive test in Milton Keynes

Latest data at **local authority (upper tier)** level provided on 3 March 2021

Daily

3

Last 7 days

9 ↓ -5 (-35.7%)

Healthcare

Patients admitted in Milton Keynes University Hospital

Latest data at **healthcare trust** level provided on 14 February 2021

Daily

3

Last 7 days

41 ↓ -31 (-43.1%)