

12 March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

An important message from Vicky Head, Director of Public Health

Thank you for all you have done so far this year to bring down the rate of COVID-19 infection in Milton Keynes. Following the first week that schools have reopened to all pupils, I wanted to write to remind you of the guidance and procedures that are in place to help ensure that the return of all children, young people and staff to schools, colleges and nurseries is as safe as possible.

Please remember to social distance and wear face coverings at the school gates to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The rate of infection is falling in Milton Keynes, but it remains high, and we are asking everyone to continue to play their part so that it continues to fall.

All of our schools, colleges and early years settings are working very hard to ensure children, young people and staff are as safe as possible whilst they are onsite, but we need the continued support of parents, families and carers when it comes to what happens before and after school.

There have been reports from concerned residents and parents of gatherings of people near school gates and sometimes outside of people's homes, particularly before and after the school day. Please remember that under the current national restrictions it is only permitted to meet with one person outside in a public place for exercise or recreation, unless they are from the same household or support bubble.

It is illegal for households to mix indoors (apart from support or childcare bubbles), which means that play dates and meeting up indoors are also prohibited at this current time.

Lateral flow testing for households

The government has confirmed that twice-weekly 'no symptom' testing using rapid lateral flow tests that can be done at home will be available to all households with primary, secondary and college aged children and young people (including their childcare and support bubbles). Up to 1 in 3 COVID-19 cases have no symptoms but can still pass on the virus, so

regular testing will help to find more cases, break chains of transmission and help keep educational settings as safe as possible.

It is important to remember that a negative rapid flow test does not completely rule out infection, and social distancing and infection prevention measures (e.g. Hands – Face – Space) should continue. If you are already isolating due to contact with a positive COVID-19 case, a negative lateral flow test does not mean you can stop isolating.

If you do test positive following a home lateral flow test, you and your household must follow self-isolation guidelines and arrange for a standard PCR test.

Rapid flow test kits for home use can be collected from some local testing sites. You can find out where by using this search tool: <https://find-covid-19-rapid-test-sites.maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/>

For those who are unable to collect the rapid test kits, a limited number are available to order online: <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

The full guidance for households and support bubbles of school pupils and staff, now eligible for twice-weekly rapid testing is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff>

Remember, anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms – high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – should self-isolate immediately along with their household and arrange a PCR test. These can be booked via the Government website or by calling 119.

Thank you for your help in driving down infections.



Vicky Head
Director of Public Health
Milton Keynes Council