



# WALTON HIGH

*Leading Learning*

Walnut Tree Campus: Fyfield Barrow Milton Keynes MK7 7WH

Brooklands Campus: Fen Street Milton Keynes MK10 7HE

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



Principal – Brooklands Andrew Bennett  
Principal – Walnut Tree Sharon Alexander

Executive Principal Michelle Currie

Chair of Governors Ayser Asif  
Business Manager Sukh Singh

24 January 2022

Dear Parents

## COVID-19 Update 53

### Face coverings

At 16:43 last Wednesday, the Department for Education (DfE) emailed school leaders to advise that the guidance relating to the use of face coverings in classrooms was changing with effect from the following day and their use in corridors from this Thursday. This lack of notice is in keeping with the DfE's performance throughout the pandemic. The lack of consideration to the timing of the change caused unnecessary anxiety for some students and families who we would have been better able to support given more notice. The sudden change also put Headteachers across England in a difficult position as some students and parents (and apparently the DfE itself) do not always appreciate that guidance from the Department is simply advice and not binding on schools.

Although the guidance from the DfE is not enforceable, Headteachers are legally required to assess risk to the health and wellbeing of staff and must put in place all practicable mitigations. Walton High will continue with this risk-based approach. Fortunately, although cases remain high locally ([Annex A](#)), the number of cases on both campuses fell during the second week of term and this trend continued at our Brooklands campus last week but there was a slight increase at the Walnut Tree campus. Despite this, as the number of cases was relatively low (see below), on Thursday we decided to advise students that the use of face coverings in classrooms was now optional and, if cases remained low, will be optional in corridors from the 27 January.

### Positive cases

The number of reported cases within the school over the past three weeks is shown below. The rise in cases at our Walnut Tree campus is mainly driven by the younger year groups.

	01/01/22 - 07/01/22	08/01/22 - 14/01/22	15/01/22 - 21/01/22
Number of positive cases reported	136	79	68
Staff testing positive	8	4	5
Students positive: Brooklands	75	55	32
Students positive: Walnut Tree	53	20	31
Asymptomatic cases	56%	56%	50%

Whilst the level of student absence remains high, with 20% absent on Friday, Walton High has not been as badly affected in comparison to some other schools. This is due to the excellent response we have seen from students to the mitigation measures in place. There have been high levels of compliance with twice weekly testing and the use of face coverings. This has helped limit the spread of the virus to teachers and thus

minimised disruption to students' education which is particularly important for those in Years 11 and 13 who are preparing for their summer exams. We are all very appreciative of the support we have received from students and families. Thank you.

The high number of positive asymptomatic cases shows the importance of testing to stop in-school transmission. Parents with children who are testing at home are reminded that an LFD test should be taken every Wednesday and Sunday evening. The result must be reported via the online [form](#). PCR tests are now only needed if symptoms are present.

Should your child test positive, we would like them back in school as soon as possible so strongly encourage they take up the option to reduce their isolation period after 5 full days by taking a lateral flow device (LFD) test on Day 5 and Day 6. If these are both negative, and they do not have a temperature, they may return to school.

### Getting back to normal

**Our Year 8 Girls 6-a-side football team** has won their regional final in the Utilita Girls Cup and are now off to represent Milton Keynes at Wembley in the national final! Well done to all the girls in the squad on their achievement so far and to Ms Mather for her highly effective coaching. Rest assured, if it comes down to a penalty shoot-out at Wembley we will be ready because, unlike the England men's team, our girls will have practised!

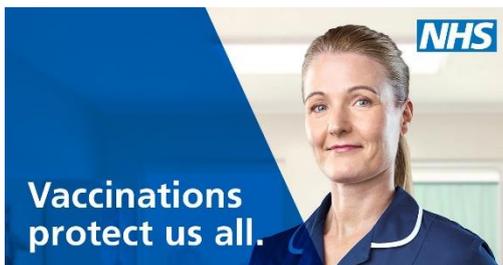
**This year's production is FOUR.** FOUR gives you a refreshed, bite-size take on classic musicals *Oliver*, *Bugsy Malone* and *Grease* as well as introducing a new musical - *The Great Comet of 1812*. Four performances from a combined cast of over a hundred Walton High students from both campuses take you on a musical journey of love, hope, family and friendship. Tickets are now available (<https://www.thevenuemk.com/event/four/>). Book early to avoid disappointment!

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards



Executive Principal



# Annex A

## Positive cases reporting in Milton Keynes on 24 January 2022 (<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>)

### Cases in Milton Keynes ▾

#### People tested positive

Daily 565 Total 70,734

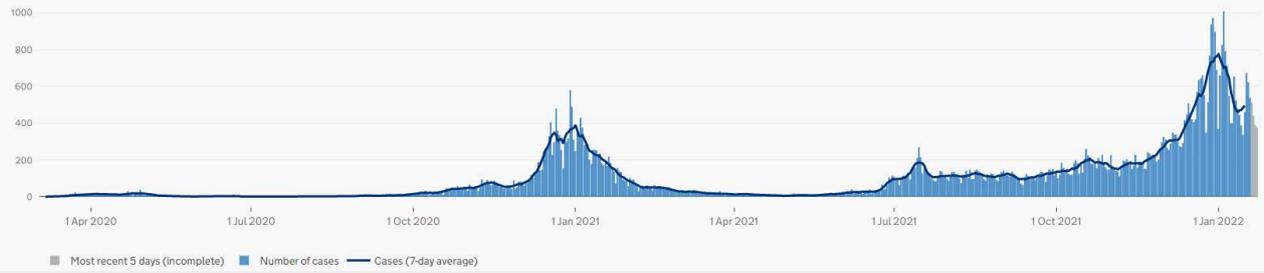
#### Cases by specimen date

Number of cases (people who have had at least one positive COVID-19 test result), by specimen date. Data for the last 5 days, highlighted in grey, are incomplete.

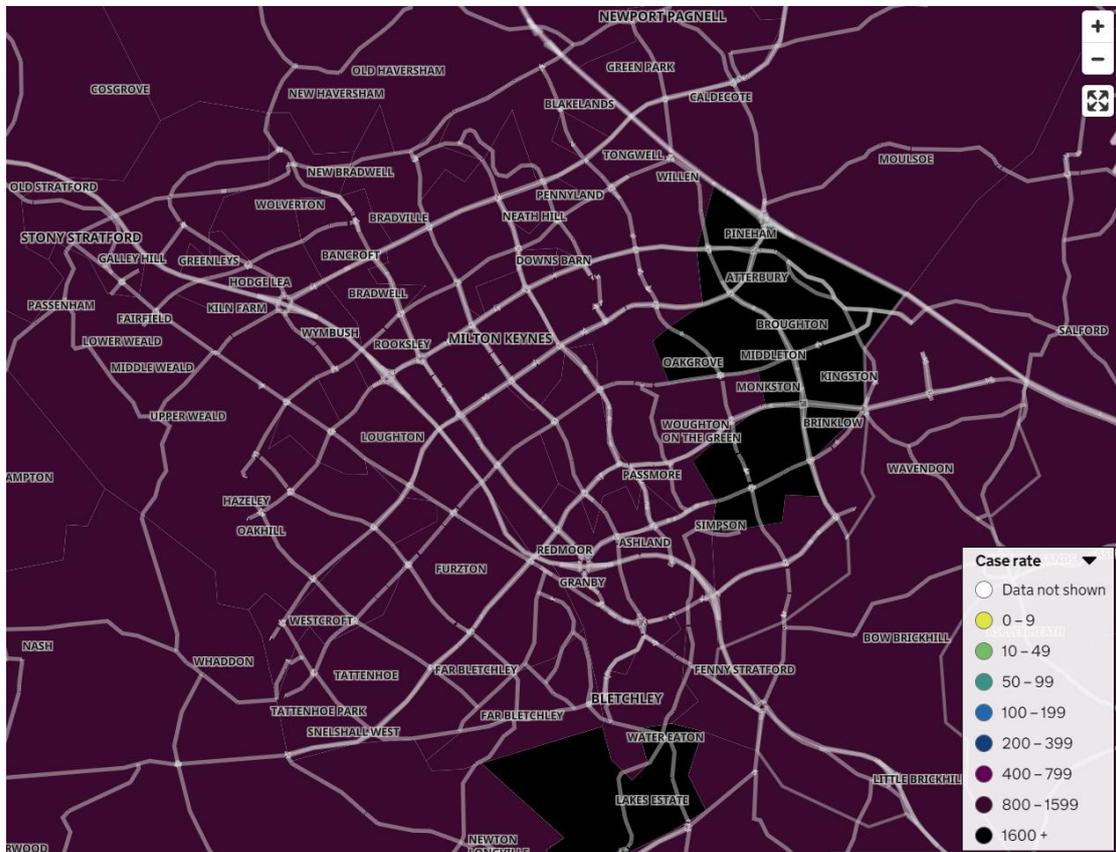
Daily Cumulative Data About

all 1y 6m 3m 1m

Linear Log



## Case rate per 100,000 people for 7-day period ending on 19 January 2022



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