



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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Principal – Brooklands Andrew Bennett
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Executive Principal Michelle Currie

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3 January 2022

Dear Parents

COVID-19 Update 49

Review of COVID-19 mitigation measures

With students returning on 4 January amidst a surge in the number of reported cases in Milton Keynes, Walton High has reviewed its risk assessment and the mitigation measures it has in place.

Our aim is to do all we can to limit the spread of COVID-19 within the school community to enable in person education to continue for all students. Having a large number of staff and students unable to attend as a result of testing positive for COVID-19 will be extremely disruptive and detrimental to our young people's education. **The school's leadership team, staff, students and parents all have an equal responsibility to do everything possible to prevent this happening.**

Testing and screening

Central to our mitigation strategy is stopping people infected with COVID-19 coming into contact with other people in the school community. This will be achieved through regular asymptomatic testing of staff and students and routine screening for [symptoms](#).

Before entering the building on Tuesday, 4 January, students will need to confirm that they:

1. should not be self-isolating as a result of testing positive within the past 10 days¹
2. do not have any [symptoms](#) associated with COVID-19
3. have, unless the school has received evidence that they are exempt, either a reusable face covering or at least three disposable face coverings²
4. have completed an LFD test within the past 24 hours which returned a negative result³

Students will be asked screening questions one to three on a daily basis.

During the course of Tuesday, **all students** will be required to self-administer an LFD test. Students will take a second on-site LFD test before the end of the week. Students who are absent will need to take an on-site LFD test on the day they return.

Following the first week of term, the school will continue to provide twice weekly on-site testing for students who have opted into this service. Students who have chosen to test at home must carry out an LFD test every Sunday and Wednesday with the results (including negative results) reported to **both** the [school](#) and the [NHS](#).

¹ This is reduced to seven days if students have returned two consecutive negative LFD tests 24 hours apart on Day 6 and Day 7 of their isolation period.

² Students who use disposable face coverings will need to have at least three because the ear loops often break making them unusable.

³ In line with the guidance schools have received from the Department for Education, this includes students who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child correctly administers the home LFD test twice a week and accurately reports the results.

Students will need to be taking part in the testing programme to attend lessons and have break and lunch at the same time as others. Alternative arrangements will be put in place for students who refuse to take part in the testing programme.

Symptoms to look out for

In addition to the three officially recognised COVID-19 symptoms of high temperature, continuous cough, and/or loss of sense of smell or taste, many people suffering from the Omicron variant have reported that they suffered from different symptoms such as runny nose, headache, fatigue (mild or severe), sneezing and or a sore throat. It is the parent's responsibility to only send their child to school if they are well and to advise the Attendance Officer for the relevant campus if their child is going to be absent.

Face coverings

Yesterday, the Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi, wrote to schools informing them that from 4 January, all students in Year 7 and above (unless exempt) will be required to wear face covering indoors, including classrooms. These will not be required outside but students should keep at least 1.5m from others.

Students exempt from wearing a face covering will be seated at the back of classrooms at the furthest point from the teacher.

Students who arrive without a face covering will be able to purchase them from Student Services at the cost of £1.00 for five.

Social distancing

Teachers will teach from their designated area and will not circulate during lessons.

Learning Support Assistants will provide one-to-one or small group support in a way that enables them to keep socially distanced from the students with whom they are working.

Vaccinations

Given the take-up of the vaccine in Milton Keynes ([Annex A](#)) is below the national figure, it is not surprising that the number of cases continues to be high ([Annex B](#)) and the rate of cases per 100,000 people (1,511.5) above the national figure (1,335.3).

Many thanks to the staff, students and parents who have supported the vaccination programme which is the major public health initiative designed to not only protect the vaccinated individual but also others in society. It is through the appliance of science and a collective effort that we will return to a more normal way of living.

Students (and other family members) who have not yet been vaccinated, or who need their second or booster injection, are encouraged to take up this offer by booking on the [NHS](#) website.

Students who remain unvaccinated need to be aware that this choice may have consequences as being vaccine hesitant may limit their career options later in life. An increasing number of occupations and companies now make vaccination a requirement of employment. It will also have an impact on the enrichment opportunities they are able to take part in, for example, it would not be possible to go on the overseas trips the school is planning as international travel once again becomes a possibility.

Contingency planning for high levels of staff absence

We are already aware of the following COVID-19 related absences for the start of term. These figures were correct at 14:00 on 3 January but may be higher by 08:30 on 4 January!

Role ↓	Base →	Brooklands campus	Walnut Tree campus	Both campuses
Teachers		3	6	1
Support staff		1	3	1

These, and the expected increase in COVID-19 related absence in the spring term, are in addition to other absences the school will be covering. Examples of known future absences are the 4-6 weeks off work I will require following eye surgery in the near future and colleagues away on maternity/parental leave.

Where possible, supply teachers will be employed to add capacity. Unfortunately, these are scarce, expensive and not always available in the subject specialisms needed.

Walton High has a contingency plan that responds to a range of scenarios that will be implemented according to the situation at any given time. Due to the unpredictable nature of the impact of the virus on staff absence, it is likely that we would not be in a position to give parents much, if any, notice of the measures we may need to put in place. However, we thought it would be helpful to set out the range of strategies we **may** need to implement.

Adding capacity to cover absences

We may need to implement some, or all, of the following strategies at any given time:

- If self-isolating, but not unwell, the class teacher delivering their lessons remotely
- Employing a general supply teacher to cover classes, students would complete the work set by their class teacher or the Subject Leader
- Where available, employing a specialist supply teacher who would plan and deliver lessons in their specialism
- Teachers volunteering to use some of their non-contact time to cover for absent colleagues in their department
- A specialist teacher delivering a lesson in person to more than one class
- A specialist teacher delivering a lesson remotely to more than one class
- Specialist teachers from one campus live streaming a lesson to a class on the other campus
- Online learning in the Independent Learning Area (ILA)
- Supervised independent study
- Redeployment of support staff to supervise classes that are working independently or being taught remotely
- As a last resort, requiring one or more year groups to work from home

Managing staff workload

- Reminding parents not to visit the school as Reception is closed
- Asking parents to contact the school **only in exceptional circumstances** and then by email
- Reminding parents that they should email, rather than phone, the attendance team with the reason for their child's absence using the appropriate email address on school's website www.waltonhigh.org.uk/contact/
- Extending the time in which the school aims to respond to queries or concerns unless it is a safeguarding issue

We may also need to implement some, or all, of the following strategies at any given time to manage pressure on staff:

- Cancelling some, or all, enrichment activities
- Removing, or amending, the frequency with which students receive written feedback
- Cancelling the Spring Term reports for some or all year groups
- Cancelling, or postponing, internal exams for some or all year groups

Expectations of students' conduct

We will continue to have the highest expectations of students' behaviour and will not tolerate anyone failing to comply with the school's [Code of Conduct](#) or the health and safety measures that are in place for everyone's protection.

Given the likelihood that staff absence will be higher than usual, on some days fewer people will be available to supervise students outside of lessons. We will therefore have a higher expectation of how students self-regulate their behaviour at these times. Failure to do so may result in some students having their social time removed.

Students who fail to comply with the standards set out within the school's [Behaviour Policy](#) will be sanctioned and we expect parents to support the school in ensuring their child behaves at all times in a self-disciplined manner.

Students who persistently interrupt teaching and learning and/or the smooth running of the school will be at risk of exclusion. We will not tolerate staff being put under additional pressure because of poor behaviour in these difficult times.

In what is likely to be a very challenging start to 2022, we all have a responsibility do everything possible to enable students to continue to learn in school whilst also managing the welfare of staff. Please discuss with your child the importance of their good conduct in achieving this aim.

Whilst we appreciate that a small minority of parents may disagree with some of the measures the school needs to put in place to limit the disruption to students' learning, we believe the above strategies will best enable us to achieve this goal for the benefit of all students.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

Best wishes for 2022.

Kind regards

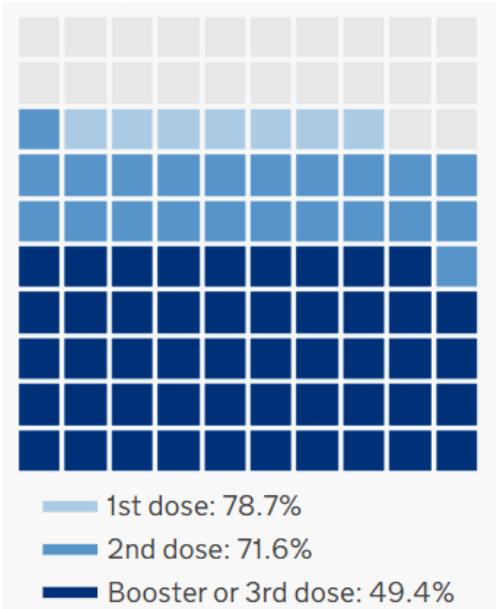


Michelle Currie
Executive Principal

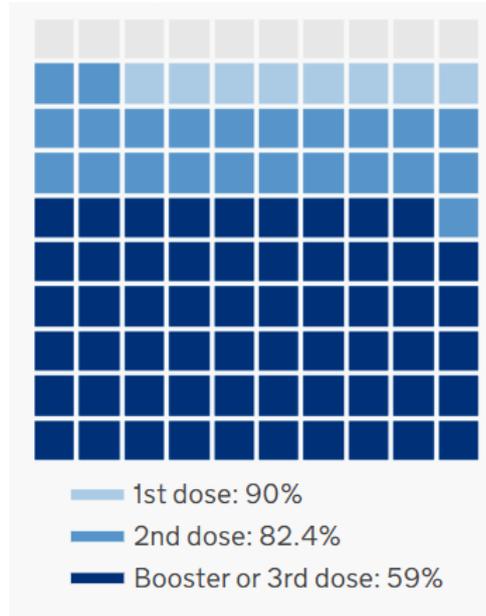


Annex A – People Vaccinated aged 12+ as of 1 January 2022

Milton Keynes



United Kingdom



Annex B

Positive cases reporting in Milton Keynes on 1 January 2022 (<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>)

Cases in Milton Keynes ▾

People tested positive

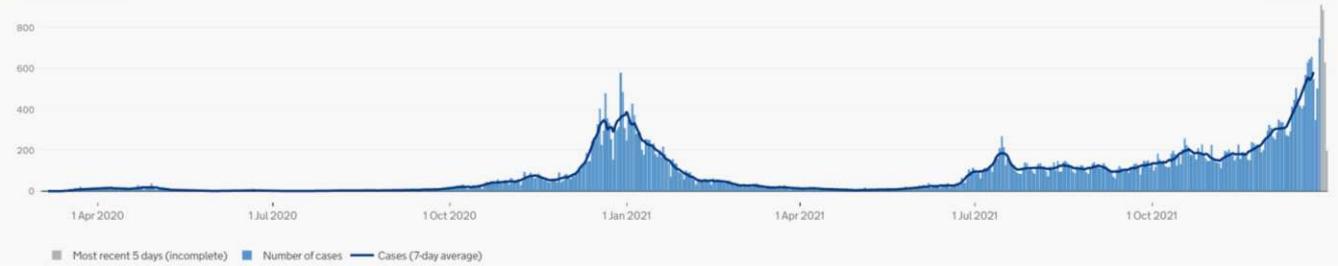
Daily	Total
777	57,256

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



Case rate per 100,000 people for 7-day period ending on 27 December 2021

