

Dear families,

In light of an increased level of cases of COVID-19 in our schools, which includes a number of cases of the Delta variant first identified in India (VOC-21APR-02, lineage B.1617), we are taking great care to track, trace and contain infection in line with our Local Outbreak Management Plan and national public health guidance.

National Public Health guidance has not changed, however, we encourage families to be extra vigilant during this time. It is really important that we do everything we can to make sure there is no additional risk to the wider community. We are responding to an ever-evolving situation which means our Public Health teams must act quickly, effectively and flexibly.

It is so important at this time of gradual 'unlocking' and with a new variant in circulation, that we all follow these four key steps:

1. Secondary school students should continue to **carry out twice weekly lateral flow (rapid) testing**; this helps us to identify positive cases of the virus where people have no symptoms.
2. We encourage families to make full use of facilities across Bristol to **carry out twice weekly lateral flow (rapid) testing**; parents, carers and guardians can collect tests from local pharmacies, Bristol collection sites or by ordering on GOV.UK.
3. If you or your child has symptoms of COVID-19 or get a positive lateral flow (rapid) test result, **you must self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test**.
4. Anyone who is self-isolating because they have been in close contact with someone who's tested positive, **should also book a PCR test** to check whether they were also infected – however, they will still have to self-isolate for the full 10 days if they have a negative result.
5. As ever, if children are not feeling well, **please consider carefully whether they need to kept home**, and if they or other family members develop COVID symptoms whilst at home, arrange a test.

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

About 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms but can still infect others. This is why lateral flow (rapid) testing is very important.

We have been encouraged by the uptake of lateral flow (rapid) testing by school children, families, parents, carers and guardians to date and want to thank everyone who continues to participate.

This form of testing is quick, free and helps to pick up positive cases of the virus where people have no symptoms and are highly infectious. By identifying these positive cases early on, we can quickly enable people to self-isolate and cut off the chain of transmission.

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It is very important that everyone is extra vigilant in light of these rising infection rates. As ever, if children are not feeling well, please consider carefully whether they need to be kept at home.

Thank you once again for your patience, flexibility, and sacrifice during this challenging time.

For more information about how and where to get lateral flow (rapid) tests, [visit the local authority website](#).

If you have symptoms and need to book a PCR test, [visit GOV.UK](#).

Support is on offer through the We Are Bristol helpline for anyone who needs emergency assistance getting food, medicines or guidance about financial support to self-isolate. Call 0800 694 0184 for free if you need help.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your school.

Christina Gray, Director for Communities and Public Health

Alison Hurley, Director for Education and Skills