

26 March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

## **Covid 19 testing for secondary aged pupils who do not have symptoms (asymptomatic)**

I am writing to you as your local Director of Public Health to thank all of you who followed my advice and took a PCR test before your son/daughter returned to school on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Barking and Dagenham had one of the highest rates of asymptomatic testing in the week before March 8<sup>th</sup> and this made a really important contribution helping keep schools safe and protect the wider community.

Owing to the number of Covid-19 cases locally, we are carrying out a programme of asymptomatic testing (for people not experiencing any symptoms).

**I am now encouraging all pupils who are attending school to get a test before they come back to school after the Easter holiday. These tests will help to reduce the risk of people without symptoms unknowingly spreading the virus to others in the school and in their community.**

**I strongly encourage anyone they live with to get a test also to make sure that anyone who may be infectious does not come to school with the virus and potentially start an outbreak.**

Please arrange to get a PCR test around 15/16<sup>th</sup> April in time to get the results before the return to school.

I am advising that if possible you take your son/daughter for a PCR test a few days before the start of term. This is because it is the most sensitive and reliable test.

## **How do I book a PCR test if I don't have symptoms?**

Go to the government website <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> where you'll be asked some questions. Select the following options:

- NO to essential worker
- NO to having symptoms
- NO to being part of a trial or pilot
- **YES - My local council or health protection team has asked me (or someone I live with) to get a test, even though I do not have symptoms**

You can book your whole family by choosing 'add family members'.

## **I can't get to a testing centre, can we get tested at home?**

Yes, you can ask to receive your test by post. When you are making your booking, answer 'Yes' to 'Is the person who needs a test part of a trial or government pilot project' and select the option that says 'The person is taking part in community testing'.

**Home tests are not suitable for children of Nursery and Reception age in your family – they need to be taken to a test centre.**

## Taking a Lateral Flow Test at Home

A second option is to use a lateral flow test at home. All families with children at school or in child care can order lateral flow tests or pick them up from the following points in the borough between 1.00pm and 8.00pm daily:

- Mayesbrook Park Car Park, Lodge Avenue, Dagenham RM8 2JR (opposite Illchester Road)
- Chadwell Heath Community Centre, High Road, Chadwell Heath RM6 6AS
- Curzon Community Centre car park, Bastable Avenue, Barking IG11 0LG

You can order test kits to be delivered to your home at this link <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

**Home tests are not suitable for children of Nursery and Reception age in your family – they need to be taken to a test centre.**

## What should I do if my child, or someone in our household, tests positive?

If you receive a positive test result, have symptoms of Covid-19, or if you've had contact with someone who has, self-isolation is the only way to guarantee you won't pass the virus on to others.

If you have to isolate, you should start the 10-day self-isolation period straight away.

## My child has tested positive recently, do they need to take another test?

If your child has tested positive in the last 90 days, they should not take another test as the dead virus may still show in their system, even if they have recovered.

## What if my family is already self-isolating?

If you've been asked to self-isolate by the NHS Test and Trace Programme or by our Public Health team you can still get tested by ordering a home testing kit. You still need to complete your period of self-isolation, even if you test negative as symptoms can take 10 days to show. More information can be found on the government's website.

Thank you for your support during these difficult times. By working together we have seen a massive reduction in the number of cases in Barking and Dagenham since January. Covid-19 is still taking people's lives, but your continued efforts will help us stop the spread. Please continue to take care and avoid risky activities such as sleepovers and parties.

Yours faithfully,



Matthew Cole  
Director of Public Health