

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Surge Testing

We hope that you have all had a pleasant Easter break. It has been a pleasure to welcome the students back into school for what we know will be another busy term.

Over the past month we have seen a steady drop in the number of Covid-19 cases locally. Thank you for all the work that you have been doing to keep our school and community safe.

You may be aware that Lambeth council is asking all those aged over 11 years who live, work or attend school or colleges in Lambeth to take a Covid-19 PCR test as soon as possible. This is to help track any possible infections after some cases of the Covid-19 variant first identified in South Africa were detected in South London. There is currently no evidence to suggest this variant causes more severe illness than others.

Everyone over the age of 11 who lives or works or attends school in Lambeth should take a Covid-19 PCR test, regardless of whether they have Covid-19 symptoms or not. Anyone who has been vaccinated should still get tested.

Even if your child has regular LFD (Rapid Lateral Flow Test) testing you and your child will still need to undertake a PCR test, as a PCR is a lab test, which is required to identify the variant.

What do you need to do?

Your child will be provided with a **PCR swab kit** for themselves by us on **Wednesday 21st** in morning tutor time.

Your child should carry out the test at home, on Wednesday 21st in the evening, with your support where needed. Your child must return it to the school the **following day on Thursday 22nd April**.

It is very important that you make sure that your son or daughter returns the completed test swabs directly to us in school on Thursday morning within the 24 hour window of them having taken the test. Tests will be collected by their tutor in registration and collected en masse by PHE and taken for processing.

There is a booklet in the kit that explains how to test and how to repackage the swabs for processing and returning to school. Please ignore P25 and 26 of the booklet, we are collecting them in school. Do not send swabs via the post.

Please go to [this website link](#) to register your test once your child arrives home with it.

Any adults in your household who live or work in Lambeth should also take a PCR test. You can book these for home delivery, visit a local test site to take a test or pick up home kits. [Find out more here.](#)

Results of these tests will be shared with you directly from the NHS on your mobile or email. If you or your child tests positive you must report it to us at school.

Your child will only have to isolate if their test result is positive. You can continue, as a family, to do regular LFD home testing. LFD and PCR tests can be carried out on the same day if convenient.

What happens next?

Everyone should continue to follow the current rules in the usual way, but your child should also now take a PCR test, whether or not they have symptoms.

If your child tests positive for Covid-19, the test will be checked to find out whether they have the variant first identified in South Africa.

If you or your child has Covid-19 symptoms (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to your taste or smell), has tested positive for Covid-19, or has been in contact with someone who has, they and the rest of your household must self-isolate. If anyone in your household does need to self-isolate, support is available. If you are a resident of Lambeth, the Stay Home Safely support service can provide the practical and emotional help you need. To find out more call 0800 054 1215 or [visit this website.](#)

Lambeth Council will be providing updates and information related to the enhanced testing on their [website here.](#) Please be assured we are following the national guidance to reduce the spread of infection in the school and will act on further advice from Lambeth or Public Health England as required.

Kind regards,

Mrs Webster

Head teacher

Some FAQs that you might find helpful.

How does this affect regular LFD testing?

This PCR testing is in addition to routine twice-weekly LFD testing. LFD tests do not enable sequencing of the virus to identify which variant is present. LFD and PCR tests can be taken on the same day if convenient.

Do parents need to consent to testing?

The PCR tests are to be carried out at home. Staff, parents and students do not need to give written consent to take part. Tests must be registered online (<https://test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/register-kit>) and the privacy notice for testing is also provided here.

Why do tests need to be registered?

All tests will need to be registered online to enable the result to be communicated to the individual. A separate instruction leaflet is included for this as it differs slightly to the information in the test leaflet. Tests must **not** be returned by post. The exception to this is if someone is self isolating and has symptoms in which case tests can be sent through priority post boxes which can be looked up on the gov.uk website.

Do household members of those who attend a Lambeth school also need to be tested?

Household members over 11 years who do not attend a Lambeth school but who live in Lambeth should get tested in the community (details atlambeth.gov.uk/enhancedtesting). If you do not live or work in Lambeth or Wandsworth, you do not need to take part in this asymptomatic PCR enhanced testing. If a staff member or student tests positive for Covid-19 then we will offer PCR tests to the other members of their household even if they live outside of Lambeth.

Should staff or students test within 90 days of a previous positive PCR test?

Anyone who has tested positive for Covid-19 within the previous 90 days does not need to be re-tested as part of this enhanced testing programme unless they develop new symptoms of Covid-19. If they *choose* to be tested, they can take a test – if this returns a positive test result they will need to self-isolate.

Do people who have been vaccinated need to be tested?

Yes. Even if you have had 2 doses of the vaccine we still want people to be tested. This will help us understand how effective the vaccines are against new and emerging variants.