

13 July 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Covid 19 testing for primary 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 child returned to school after Easter and half term. This made a really important contribution helping keep schools safe and protect the wider community.

The number of Covid-19 cases locally is still rising. Public Health are carrying out a programme of asymptomatic testing (for people not experiencing any symptoms).

I am now encouraging all pupils who are attending primary school in September to get a test before they come back to school in September. 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.

I am advising that if possible you take your child for a PCR test a few days before the start of term, in time to get the results back before your child goes back to school. The PCR test 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 for children in Nursery and Reception – 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. You can pick these up for free from most pharmacies or from:

Barking Learning Centre Town Hall Square, Barking, IG11 7NB – 7 days a week 10.00am to 6.45pm
Dagenham Library, 1 Church Elm Lane, Dagenham, RM10 9QS – 7 days a week 10.00am to 6.45pm

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 for children in Nursery and Reception – they need to be taken to a test centre.

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.

For the most up to date information please check the government's website. [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)

Thank you for your support during these difficult times. By working together we have supported schools to keep open and as many children attending as possible. Covid-19 is being spread rapidly by young people so your continued efforts will help us protect those who are vulnerable in Barking and Dagenham.

Yours faithfully,



Matthew Cole
Director of Public Health