

Ernest Bevin College and Sixth Form Centre



A Specialist Sports, Mathematics & Computing College

Beechcroft Road, Tooting, London, SW17 7DF

Tel: 020 8672 8582 Fax: 020 8767 5502

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Principal: Tracy Dohel

Tuesday 20th April 2021

Dear Parents and carers,

Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Over the past month we have seen a steady drop in the number of Covid-19 cases locally and no cases associated with the college. Thank you for all the work that you have been doing to keep our college and community safe. Every mask worn, test done, hand sanitised and distance respected reduces the risk of transmission of this disease.

You may be aware that Wandsworth council is asking all those aged over 11 years who live, work or attend school or colleges in Wandsworth 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, or that the regulated vaccines would not protect against it, however there are concerns that this variant could potentially undermine the great work and sacrifices made by everyone over the past months.

Everyone over the age of 11 who lives, works or attends school in Wandsworth 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 you have regular LFD (rapid) testing you will still need to undertake a PCR test, as a PCR is a lab test, which is required to identify the variant.

We will issue each student with 4 tests to cover themselves and their household. Please write a note in your son or daughter's planner if your household is larger than this. Please be aware that families with several children attending local schools may get several supplies of tests. Spare, unopened tests can be returned to the college.

What happens next?

Everyone should continue to follow the current COVID-19 rules in the usual way.

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

If someone you live with develops symptoms (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough and a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste), they will need to self-isolate at home along with all the other people who live with them; this will include you. In this situation you should all follow Stay at Home: Guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19. You can read the stay at home guidance on the government website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>.

Contacts of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 need to self-isolate at home because they are at risk of developing COVID-19 themselves in the next 10 days. They could spread the virus to

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others, even before any symptoms begin. If you are a contact of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, but you do not have symptoms, other people living with you do not need to self-isolate.

Wandsworth Council will be providing updates and information related to the enhanced testing on their website www.wandsworth.gov.uk/surge-testing.

What do you need to do?

- Your child will be provided with a PCR swab kit for themselves and their household by the college.

Your child and any family member (including those over the age of 3 should you wish) should carry out the test at home, with your support where needed, then you must register the test online (see below). Your child must return all completed tests to college the **following day**. The test should be undertaken on **Wednesday 21st April and returned on the morning of Thursday 22nd April**.

- It is very important that you return the completed test swabs **directly to the school** the day after you undertake the test (Thursday 22 April), and **do not** post swabs in a post box.
- Please follow these instructions, **not** the instructions provided inside the kit.
- Please go to the website link www.gov.uk/register-your-test to register your test.
- **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 your school.**
- You will only have to isolate if your 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.
- Likewise you only need to inform the college of positive test results.

If you have Covid-19 symptoms, have tested positive for Covid-19, or have been in contact with someone who has, you must self-isolate.

Local support is available (details www.wandsworth.gov.uk/self-isolation-support) including help with practical things like shopping and medication. You may be eligible for a £500 support payment if you are on a low income and have to self isolate.

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Please be assured we are following the national guidance and our risk assessment to reduce the spread of infection in the college and will act on further advice from Wandsworth or Public Health England as required.

Kind regards,

Tracy Dohel
Principal

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FAQs

What if myself or someone in my household has symptoms/ is self-isolating what do I need to do?

If you have symptoms and are self-isolating you should follow the stay at home guidance available on the Gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

You should order a test via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>, or use the NHS COVID-19 app, or by calling 119. Please do not attend college or return test kits to college if you are self-isolating.

How does this affect regular LFD testing?

This PCR testing is in addition to routine twice-weekly Lateral Flow Device 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 by families (www.gov.uk/register-home-test) 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 Wandsworth school also need to be tested?

Household members over 11 years who do not attend a Wandsworth school but who live in Wandsworth should get tested. This is why we have also provided sufficient tests to cover all household members. Although the target group is 11+, you may test younger children if you wish.

If you do not live or work in Wandsworth or Lambeth, you do not need to take part in this asymptomatic PCR enhanced testing.

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 COVID-19 vaccines, you should still be tested. This will help us understand how effective the vaccines are against new and emerging variants.