

Ealing Council
Perceval House
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3rd March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

We hope that you and your family are well. We recognise that this has been a challenging time for everyone and would like to thank you for your commitment to supporting your children's education at home over the last few months. We know that this hasn't been easy.

Thankfully, there are reasons to be optimistic: the infection rates have decreased in Ealing, over 60,000 Ealing residents have been vaccinated and spring weather is upon us.

As you will already be aware, the government announced that from Monday 8th March, **all children should return to school and attendance will be mandatory for all pupils from this date.** Your child's school will be in touch with you to let you know when your child should attend.

We know that the vast majority of children are looking forward to returning to school, to see their friends and teachers again. However, if you have any concerns, or if for any reason your child is unable to attend, you should raise this with the school who will discuss this with you to support your child's return. We do not intend to issue fines for non-attendance before the easter holidays except in very exceptional circumstances.

The [Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health](#) has made it clear that the overwhelming majority of children and young people still have no symptoms or very mild illness only. Returning to school is vital for their educational progress, wellbeing, and wider development.

For children who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV)

There is growing scientific evidence that many children first identified at the start of the pandemic as [clinically extremely vulnerable \(CEV\)](#) are not at increased risk of serious outcomes from Covid-19 and children are gradually being removed from the shielding patient list as appropriate, following review with a clinician. The advice for pupils who have been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable is to shield and stay at home as much as possible until further notice. They are advised not to attend school while shielding advice applies nationally.

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Schools will continue to implement the range of [protective measures](#) that they have been using throughout the last term to manage risks and to ensure it is safe for your child to attend.

What are the main changes?

For primary school pupils

For primary schools, there will be an additional new measure of staff testing (using twice weekly lateral flow tests) which help to identify infection and break chains of transmission.

Parents of school aged pupils, their childcare and support bubbles, will be offered free lateral flow tests and are encouraged to start twice weekly testing as schools return. Details on how to access testing can be found further below.

For high school pupils

For high school aged pupils, there will **be two additional new measures** this term in line with government guidelines:

- **Face coverings** to be worn in classrooms and corridors/crowded spaces ([unless exempt](#)) where social distancing cannot be maintained. The wearing of face coverings in classrooms is being introduced for a limited time until Easter and will be reviewed at that point. Face coverings are an important measure to prevent airborne spread of the virus and we strongly encourage your support with this.
- **Regular testing of pupils and staff** (twice weekly) to identify any infection early in order to break chains of transmission. We know that coronavirus can spread even when people do not have symptoms, so it is important that staff and students take part in this to protect the school community. On return to school, students will be supervised to take a rapid COVID test at the school test site three times (3-5 days apart) and then be given their own home testing kits to do at home. We urge your support to do this and will need you to fill in consent forms as requested by your school.

We understand that some pupils may not feel comfortable with testing, therefore special schools have been provided with flexibility on how these tests are provided. Home testing kits can be provided earlier, if this helps. Your child's school will be able to work with you to agree the most appropriate way for your child to participate in twice-weekly testing.

Parents of school aged pupils, their childcare and support bubbles, will be offered free lateral flow tests and are encouraged to start twice weekly testing as schools return. Details on how to access this testing can be found below.

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Test

Parents of school aged pupils, their childcare and support bubbles, will be offered [free lateral flow tests](#) and are encouraged to start twice weekly testing as schools return.

Tests can be obtained by:

- Ordering on-line: [Order rapid lateral flow home test kits](#)
- Taking tests at one of Ealing's Asymptomatic Community Testing Sites: [Get a test](#)
- Collecting a supply of tests from one of the Local Testing Sites that provide that service near to your home or work: [Find your nearest covid-19 rapid test site](#)

The virus is still around, and until most of the population gets vaccinated, we still need to follow the public health rules to prevent another surge in infection rates. It is really important that we all observe the following key behaviours:



Stay at home and self-isolate if you have Coronavirus symptoms

If your child, or anyone in your household, develops symptoms of COVID-19 (a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a loss or change in taste or smell), or if anyone is identified as a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, you **must not** send your child to school. You must all [stay at home](#) and the person with symptoms should get tested as soon as possible. Apply for a [test online](#) or call 119. Please see this [flowchart](#) for parents/carers.

If you are self-isolating, you may also be eligible for a [self-isolation payment](#).

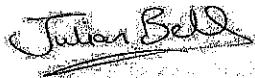
Testing for residents without symptoms

Due to a small number of cases of South African strain of coronavirus in Ealing, Ealing residents who do not have any symptoms but need to leave home for any essential reason during lockdown are being asked to [get a test](#) at one of the community test sites. This includes bi-weekly tests for people who need to work outside their home during lockdown or a one-off test if they need to leave home for any essential reason (such as shopping). People who are shielding (clinically extremely vulnerable) do not need to leave home to get a test at these sites. If anyone tests positive at these test sites, they will need to isolate and get a PCR test.

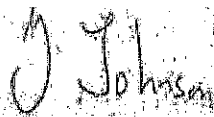
Covid vaccine

The Covid vaccine gives you the best protection from the severe illness from coronavirus so make sure you join the growing number of Ealing residents who have been vaccinated when you receive an invitation from the NHS. All 16 to 18 year olds who are in an at risk group will be offered a vaccine in priority group 6 of the vaccination programme.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Julian Bell
Leader of the Council



Clr Yvonne Johnson
Portfolio Holder Schools
& Children's Services



Anna Bryden
Director of Ealing Public Health

