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Ref: DK/JM/GK/KR
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Dear Parent/Carer

We hope you and your family had a restful Easter break. Please find below key updates in preparation for the summer term, both in terms of Covid-19 measures and support for children and families.

Roadmap Step 2 and reminder to parents/carers

On 12 April, we moved into Step 2 of the roadmap out of lockdown as planned by the Government. While we welcome this development, it is important to remember that Covid-19 is still part of our lives and schools are still not back to normal.

School controls, including those around social distancing, remain in place. Important safety measures that will continue include:

- Making sure pupils and staff only come to school if they and other members of their household are well
- Regular handwashing and increased hygiene
- Limited contact between 'bubbles', where possible
- For secondary age and college pupils, taking part in regular testing and wearing of face coverings in communal and classroom areas unless exempt

See our [Return to School' booklet](#) for more information on these safety measures.

Council teams and schools have been working closely together to ensure these steps are taken effectively. To help protect the health and safety of the whole school community and keep our schools open, please do your part and keep to the Hands, Space, Face guidelines and get tested regularly. Please also do not mix indoors with people you do not live with, or who are not in your support bubble.

Twice weekly testing

Regular testing continues to play a really important role to help stop the spread of the virus in our communities. Lateral Flow Device, or LFD tests are being used for twice a week testing in people who do not have symptoms, as a spot check. These are rapid tests, with results given in 30 minutes. LFDs work differently to PCR tests, and PCR tests are used for people who have symptoms.

Regular testing is important as 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 do not have symptoms and can spread the virus without knowing. Children are most likely to catch Covid-19 from their parents/carers, so by taking part in regular testing, you will help to stop the virus from getting into schools.

Secondary age and college pupils should continue to test twice weekly at home into the summer term using the LFD test kits provided by the school / college. Please [share this video \(produced by local young people\)](#) with your child for a guide on how to self-test.

If your child receives a positive LFD result, then they should self-isolate immediately (along with the household), let the school know, and arrange for a PCR test within 48 hours to check the result.

Parents, carers and adult family members without symptoms can get twice-weekly LFD tests in the following ways:

- [Get a test at a symptom-free test site](#) – no need to book
- [Collect a home test kit](#) at Community Collect sites – pick up yours at your nearest test site, library or leisure centre
- [Order a home test kit online](#) and have it delivered to your home

Symptom-free testing is now available for all residents, and the Government advises that you should continue to get tested even if you have had the Covid-19 vaccination.

All staff working in schools and colleges continue to be offered twice weekly testing as well, as part of keeping the school community safe.

Please remember, that if anyone in your household develops symptoms of Covid-19, however mild, then they should self-isolate immediately and [get a PCR test](#) (no need to book), rather than using an LFD test. PCR tests work differently to LFD tests and are used when a person has symptoms. PCR tests can find even small amounts of the virus, so can be used early on in the infection. Results can take up to 3 days as they need to be sent to the lab.

Self-isolation support for parents and carers (including payments)

Self-isolation is about protecting others and slowing the spread of Covid-19. It is the best way to prevent the virus from spreading. You will only be asked to self-isolate because you have either tested positive for Covid-19 or you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19.

Parents and carers who live in the borough are now able to apply for a Test and Trace Support Payment if they have to stop working due to childcare responsibilities.

The scheme ensures that parents/carers receive the financial support they need if they cannot work from home whilst caring for a child who needs to self-isolate, and will lose income as a result. If this happens to you and you meet the eligibility criteria, you may be able to get £500 support payment from the council.

If you don't meet the eligibility criteria, you may still qualify for a discretionary payment if you are on a low income and/or may face hardship as a result of being unable to work while your child self-isolates.

If your child has been told to self-isolate, you will receive a letter from their school advising this – you will need this letter to apply for the support payment.

To apply, the child or young person must have been told to self-isolate on or after 8 March 2021. Applications can be backdated to this point and you will be eligible for the payment if you meet all the other criteria (for the main scheme or the discretionary scheme).

[Click here](#) to see the full eligibility criteria and how to apply.

In addition to financial support for eligible residents, the council also offer other types of support to those isolating, including help to access food for those who need it. Please visit the council website to [view the full offer](#) or call 020 8496 3000 (choose the option for Housing Benefit) for more information.

Webinar Special, 21 April: Staying Safe in Schools and Childcare Settings During Covid-19

All parents and carers are invited to the next council webinar which will be on safety in schools and settings during Covid-19. This includes nurseries, primary and secondary schools, as well as special schools and colleges.

The event will be held live on the [council's Facebook](#) (@walthamforestcouncil) on Wednesday 21 April, 5.30pm-6.30pm.

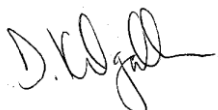
You will hear updates from schools and settings, learn more about how we're keeping children and young people safe, and get the latest Covid-19 updates and guidelines for schools and families.

You can ask questions during the event or [click here to submit your question in advance](#).

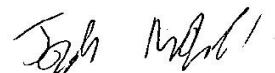
Joining the webinar is free and easy to attend – no registration is required, and you don't need a Facebook account.

Thank you to all our parents and carers for your contribution to keeping our borough safe and reducing the spread of coronavirus.

Yours sincerely



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Director of Learning and System Leadership



Joe McDonnell
Director of Public Health