

Ask for: Gerry Kemble  
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Direct line: 020 8496 4430  
Ref: GK/KR  
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Dear colleague

### **Return to school after half-term**

We are into the final half-term of what has been an extraordinary academic year. Below I offer a guidance note along with an outline of support from the Council that is being provided or is available to access.

### **Staff and maintenance of bubbles and social distancing**

Firstly, some intelligence and advice following recent experiences at a couple of schools in the Borough.

We have seen examples where there have been multiple confirmed cases in school-based staff. At the schools in question they have absolutely maintained the integrity of their bubbles (either class or year group based) however, it has become clear that staff in different bubbles have mixed socially outside of work and this appears to have resulted in direct transmission, as some staff were asymptomatic.

Clearly the staff in question have not breached any rules, given the easing of restrictions on 17 May, but their actions outside of work appear to have had an impact on school operations.

My advice is to sensitively engage with staff and remind them of appropriate control measures that they should consider adhering to. These should/could include;

- Undertaking Lateral Flow Tests twice a week (a third of people show no symptoms)
- Minimising contact with staff colleagues outside of work
- When mixing with colleagues seek to limit to those in the same bubble
- If mixing with colleagues outside of their bubble always do so outside
- If mixing inside wear face coverings in accordance with guidance and always seek to maintain 2m social distancing
- Booking their Covid-19 vaccination when it is offered, but ensuring that where staff have received their Covid-19 vaccination(s), they understand that it is still vitally important that the above measures continue to be followed

I know many Headteachers are frustrated that all the controls they so carefully put in place at school are potentially undermined by actions of parents/carers, pupils and staff outside of school. I would advise that influencing and reminders of reasonable expectations are the best way to approach staff at this time.

Please encourage your staff and the wider school community to continue to undertake twice weekly lateral flow tests (even where they are vaccinated).

### **School supply of PCR tests**

A communication was sent out via the The Hub newsletter before the end of term updating schools that all close contacts of confirmed cases should now take a PCR test. This is to better understand the spread of and contain the virus. A negative PCR result does not alter the requirement to self-isolate for the full 10 days.

Between Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June and Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June, each school in the Borough will receive a delivery of 35 PCR test kits. These are not intended for use in an ad hoc way but rather as a targeted response to a confirmed case in school. Where a bubble/class is sent home from school to self-isolate these kits should be distributed to the close contacts at the time, in order to speed up the deployment of the tests and increase the likelihood of the tests being taken. If the close contacts are not in school at the time of the report of the confirmed case/when informed to isolate, there will be a discussion with the local Public Health team to agree the deployment of the kits which would most likely involve advising parents to come in to collect one, or advice to attend a nearby PCR test.

As is the case at present, further support to the school will be discussed and agreed as part of engagement with Public Health. If further kits are required as more than 35 pupils/staff are self-isolating, then this can be arranged as an additional delivery to the school or families can be signposted to the nearest PCR test site/or how to order PCR kits online.

### **Support from Specialist Public Health nurse**

Tricia May-Parrott, is a Specialist Public Health Nurse for NELFT NHS Foundation Trust. She is currently working closely with Public Health to support the management of COVID outbreaks in educational settings.

Tricia is available to support and advise schools with infection control in school and can offer support in terms of engagement with parents and carers around health advice for children regarding Covid-19. Tricia can be contacted as follows;

Mobile: 07802 378749

Email: [tricia.may-parrott@nelft.nhs.uk](mailto:tricia.may-parrott@nelft.nhs.uk)

Working hours: Wednesday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

### **Support from Stay Safe Champions**

We also have our Stay Safe Champion team that can further support with information around COVID-19 and how to keep safe.

We can also provide COVID safe School engagement, by providing parents with home test kits and making sure parents are socially distancing at the School gates.

We have over 300 residents signed up to their virtual Stay Safe broadcast so far. Via Whatsapp and email, we share the latest Covid-19 guidance straight to these residents so they can then share with people they know that might need it. For more information, join the distribution list [www.walthamforest.gov.uk/content/stay-safe-champions](http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/content/stay-safe-champions).

If you would like us to organise school engagement please contact Shingirai Nyabango (Communication and engagement Officer)@ [shingirai.nyabango@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:shingirai.nyabango@walthamforest.gov.uk).

Regards as always



**Gerry Kemble**  
**Assistant Director Schools**