



**Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
Guildhall
High Street
Kingston-upon-Thames
KT1 1EU**

28th May 2021

Dear Headteacher,

Thank you for your ongoing work to help Keep Kingston Safe from COVID-19. Unfortunately, I have to update you that cases of COVID-19 in Kingston are starting to rise again, with cases mostly being found in young people and young adults in Kingston in the last two weeks. I am writing to you with some actions for your consideration and messages that we would be most grateful if you could take forward to help us turn around the increasing case rate:

Getting tested is key to helping us stop outbreaks in their tracks: We are very much aware that the hayfever season has started and colds are also being reported. However, we ask you to remain vigilant for COVID-19 symptoms, and for anyone (staff and students and their household members) with a high temperature; new or continuous cough; or loss of, or change in sense of smell or taste, to self isolate (together with the rest of their household) and arrange a PCR test. **Please emphasize that everyone in the household must self isolate while awaiting results for someone with symptoms - and all in household must continue to self isolate if anyone has a positive result.** By identifying cases as soon as possible, we can support these cases and their contacts to self isolate, as well as consider other measures to stop any onward spread.

It is also a good opportunity to remind all secondary school staff and pupils to continue to test twice weekly with the lateral flow home testing kits to detect asymptomatic infection and report their results. It is important they continue to test during the half term holidays and before the return to school.

Family members and other members of our community can still access free 'Rapid' (LFT) testing (for people without coronavirus symptoms). These are available at locations across the Borough or they can access home test kits that can be collected from some test sites and pharmacies, or via home delivery. Full details about how to access testing and home test kits can be found on the [Kingston testing webpages](#).

Face coverings: With our case numbers in schools on the increase, we would advise secondary school pupils to continue to wear face coverings in communal areas, where social distancing can't be maintained, and to also consider introducing them again during lessons. Please remind parents to continue to wear face coverings and socially distance when dropping off and picking children up at the start and end of the school day. With variants of concern spreading nationally, it is important we all continue to follow government guidelines, even once vaccinated.

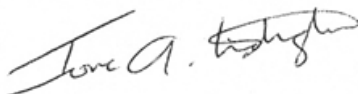
Help is available for anyone who must self isolate: Please do remind parents that help is available if they have been asked to self isolate, whatever their income. If they need urgent help to get their shopping or medicine delivered, or other support, they can contact the Kingston Council 'Kingston Stronger Together' hub. There is also some financial support available for eligible households. The contact details for more information are: www.kingston.gov.uk/Covid19-needhelp or 020 8547 5000.

Registering staff, parents and carers as 'contacts': Some school staff, parents and carers may be eligible for a one-off Test and Trace Support Payment of £500 or a local support scheme. Staff identified as close contacts of a positive case will require an NHS Test and Trace Account ID number (CTAS number) to be able to claim a Test and Trace Support Payment or discretionary payment. Parents and carers of children who have to self-isolate should be provided with a letter confirming that the student has been asked to self isolate to support their application for payment, but will not require an NHS Test and Trace Account ID number (CTAS number).

To report staff contacts, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) self-isolation service-hub phone line is available on: (020 3743 6715) and is open 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm, allowing a school to provide contact details of any staff who have been asked to self-isolate and are likely to be eligible for the Test and Trace Support Payment or discretionary payment. Please ensure you have the 8-digit NHS Test and Trace Account ID (sometimes referred to as a CTAS number) of the person who has tested positive (the 'case'). If you do not have the NHS Test and Trace Account ID for the person who has tested positive, staff at the service-hub will assist in tracing the person in order to register them and provide the CTAS number.

Once again, I would like to thank you for continuing to help Keep Kingston Safe and wish you a good Bank Holiday and half term break.

Kind regards,



Iona Lidington
Director of Public Health
Kingston Council