

Ealing Council
Perceval House
14-16 Uxbridge Road
London W5 2HL

Monday 6 December 2021

Dear parents and carers,

Re: Public Health advice to reduce COVID-19 transmission in schools

Since half term, rates of covid in schools have rapidly increased with children aged 5 to 10 having the highest rates in the borough. In addition to this, the government announced further measures in schools in response to the Omicron variant. These measures include the use of face coverings in communal areas and on dedicated school transport for secondary school staff, students, and visitors, and in communal areas for primary school staff and visitors.

We are expecting rates in school children to continue to rise over the Winter period. We would like to remind you of the following advice in addition to hands, face, space and ventilation:

Get tested regularly

Secondary school students are encouraged to get tested twice a week. Rapid testing kits are provided at schools and can also be picked up at local pharmacies and centres.

If you have symptoms

If you have a new continuous cough, a high temperature, or a lack of sense of smell/taste – you need to isolate and get tested immediately. PCR tests are available to take at home or at walk-in centres.

Self-isolation rules

You should note that self-isolation rules have changed. If you live with or have been in contact with someone who may have the Omicron variant of Covid-19, you will now need to self-isolate for 10 days regardless of whether you are double jabbed. NHS Test and Trace will contact you if this is the case.

Say yes to the vaccine

The vaccine is the best way to stay safe against the virus. We would encourage all those who are eligible to get their vaccines.

Travel

Travel restrictions may change at short notice over the Christmas period. As of 26 November, travellers to countries on the red list are required to take a COVID-19 test 3 days before travelling back to England and isolate in a **quarantine facility** on return. Quarantine costs for 1 adult for 10 days (11 nights) are £2285 including transport, accommodation, food and drink, and Covid tests.

If you are fully vaccinated and arrive in England from a country that is not on the red list, you:

- must quarantine at home or in the place you're staying
- take a PCR test (must be purchased privately – costs around £50 per person) before the end of day 2 after you arrive (lateral flow tests will not be accepted)
- can end quarantine if your PCR test result is negative

Additional measures

We have also proposed additional local measures to help control the infection rate and maintain education for our children in Ealing. Similar measures are being advised in schools across several boroughs in London.

It is important to note that these measures are in addition to the Department for Education guidance and are being recommended due to increasing rates and to support schools to continue with in-person education up to the Christmas holidays.

It is up to parents to make individual family decisions on whether to implement the following advice, but you are strongly encouraged to do so by both the school and the local authority. Some of these measures may already be implemented for a time limited period in schools with concerning levels of covid.

Testing in a covid positive household

If a member of your household tests positive, we recommend that household members attending **primary or secondary** school undertake 7 days of daily testing with lateral flow tests. Lateral flow tests can be ordered online: [Order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests).

LFTs should be taken for 7 days from the date of COVID-19 symptoms started in the household or from the date of the first positive test if there are no symptoms. In addition, all household members should undertake a PCR test. Covid is commonly spread amongst a household, even in those who are vaccinated.

Limiting social/non-essential activity in covid positive households

If a member of your household tests positive, we recommend that the family limits social or non-essential activity outside of the school day for 10 days from the date of the first positive test if there are no symptoms or 10 days from the date that COVID-19 symptoms started in the household. This includes playdates, sports, parties, and any extracurricular activities. This will help to reduce ongoing transmission across the borough.

Christmas events

Schools have been advised to continue with existing good, covid-safe practices when hosting in-person events such as nativities and carol services. School risk assessments will consider several measures including hosting events virtually if Covid case rates dictate, limiting the number of people attending events, crowd control measures such as zoning and one-way systems, and hosting events outside if feasible.

Any families attending school events should ensure that they have taken a lateral flow test prior to the event. Anyone who has symptoms of Covid-19 or has tested positive for Covid-19 will not be able to attend any such events and will be required to follow national guidance on staying at home.

Thank you for all your support as we continue to work to keep Ealing safe.

Kind regards,

Anna Bryden, Director of Public Health, Ealing Council



Cllr Josh Blacker, Cabinet Member for Healthy Lives, Ealing Council



Cllr Kamaljit Nagpal, Cabinet Member for A Fairer Start, Ealing Council



Useful links

Omicron variant: [Prime Minister sets out new measures as Omicron variant identified in UK: 27 November 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Quarantine (including costs) [Booking and staying in a quarantine hotel if you've been in a red list country - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and [How to quarantine at home after international travel - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Red list countries: [Red list of countries and territories - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Stay at home guidance: [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Testing: <https://www.ealing.gov.uk/covidtest>

Vaccinations: <http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus-vaccine>