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**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Dear Parent or Carer,

As you will be aware, due to Covid-19 rates in the Wokingham Borough area we have been working really closely with our colleagues in Public Health. As a council and importantly within Children's Services, we are committed to doing our best to ensure the children and families that make up our community are as safe as possible.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have engaged in the surge testing process over the past two weeks and strongly encourage you to promote the vaccination programme for those now eligible. Our surge vaccination centre is located at Bulmershe Leisure Centre (Woodlands Ave, Woodley, Reading RG5 3EU) which is open from 09:30 to 20:30 every day up to and including Sunday 27 June. We are inviting all those aged between 18 to 24 to attend, with no appointment necessary. Residents aged 25 and over are encouraged to continue to book a Covid-19 vaccination at a mass vaccination centre through the [NHS website](#).

On Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June, Central Government advised that there will be a four-week pause at Step 3 of the national Covid Response Roadmap to further control the spread of the virus. Step 3 restrictions remain in place, and it is hoped that England will move to Step 4 on 19 July, though the data will be reviewed after two weeks in case the risks have reduced.

The health risks of coronavirus to the majority of children and young people remain low, however, we know rates are currently much higher in children between aged 11-16 than at earlier phases in the pandemic.

We fully appreciate the perseverance and commitment you have already shown over the last year but, as we know, rates are increasing among children and those that have not been vaccinated. We must reiterate the need to encourage your children to follow the guidelines and for young adults to get vaccinated. Current guidance and advice is available for reference at the end of this letter.

There are three things that we can all do, to keep COVID at bay and see the ending of all restrictions safely:

- 1) Test regularly
- 2) Get vaccinated
- 3) Hands – Face – Space – Fresh Air

Leaders in our schools and settings across the borough continue to work hard to ensure your children can get the best experience at school and college currently in line with the Department of Education restrictions. This means at times some difficult decisions are having to be made as some activities are unable to proceed under current restrictions. We encourage you to support schools in their continuing endeavours to keep your children and our community safe. Events that everyone may have been looking forward to will have to take place differently this year or be postponed and we thank everyone for their support in respect of changes to transition arrangements, sports days and end of term events. We look forward to a time when these can return safely and thank you for your support in helping us move to that time more quickly.

With thanks for your continued engagement and support,



**Sal Thirlway**

Assistant Director of Children's Services (Learning, Achievement and Partnership)

**Guidance and Advice**

**Symptom Free Testing**

All adults and secondary and college age students are encouraged to take a symptom-free rapid lateral flow test (LFD) twice a week, even if you have been vaccinated. Schools are providing these to eligible secondary pupils and for families you can collect a home testing kit from a designated site or order online. Find out more about symptom-free LFD testing [here](#).

Pupils with a positive rapid lateral flow test result must self-isolate in line with the stay-at-home guidance. They will also need to arrange a lab-based polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to confirm the result. Find out how to book a PCR test [here](#).

If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test and the pupil and contacts can return to school, as long as they don't have COVID-19 symptoms.

**Testing if you have symptoms**

Anyone showing symptoms should immediately isolate and get a PCR test, and everyone in the household should continue to isolate until the PCR test result is received. If positive, they will be advised further by NHS Test and Trace.

**Staying Safe Outside Class**

Your child must follow the government guidance in force when outside of school or college. The changes around the gradual easing of lockdown apply equally to young people, so please encourage your children to follow the guidelines:

## Hands – Face – Space – Fresh Air

Coronavirus restrictions remain in place, including for people who have been vaccinated:

- You can meet indoors in a group of up to 6 people or a group of any size from 2 households
- You can meet outside in a group of up to 30 people
- Work from home if you can and travel safely
- If you have symptoms get a test and stay at home

If you or your child feel anxious about coronavirus, that can be expected but, it is important to take action early. There are lots of tips on ways to cope along with sources of help available at [Young Minds](#), [Mind](#), or [The Red Cross](#) . Children and young people in Wokingham can also chat confidentially and anonymously to other young people and mental wellbeing professionals online at [Kooth](#).