

Dear Colleagues,

To keep you all up-to-date with the latest information on Coronavirus (COVID-19), and help protect yourself and others, we will be issuing regular updates.

The dedicated COVID-19 information area on the HES portal contains all communications and updates from the Local Authority and central government relating to COVID-19. All early years providers and schools can access this area by using the following link: <http://hes.org.uk/covid19>.

The items in this update are intended for all education providers - where the guidance is only relevant to a particular phase of education or type of provider, this is indicated.

Communications with Parents/Carers

Attached to this Update is a letter to parents/carers from the Local Authority, and can I please ask that this is cascaded via your usual communication methods. The letter contains some important Public Health advice related to the wider opening of schools from 8th March, but this means that it is a little long, so feel free to add your own covering note to clarify the position for your school.

To also support your communications with parents, some specific education & childcare graphics have been produced and are attached to this Update. The Local Authority will also be promoting these graphics through its own social media channels. They are being shared in a .jpg format to enable you to use them in your own communications with parents/carers.

They graphics cover a range of topics including;

- Self-isolating
- Overnight stays
- Meeting indoors
- Wearing face coverings

The wider 'DoingMyBit' campaign materials can be downloaded using the link below;

<https://www.havering.gov.uk/doingmybit>

Asymptomatic Testing of Secondary Age Pupils Prior to 8 March

A number of schools and colleges have asked whether they can start testing pupils and students the week before Monday 8 March to help manage the flow of pupils and students through on-site assisted test sites (ATS).

Schools and colleges may start testing students and pupils before Monday 8 March if they would like to do so. This is voluntary and at the discretion of each school or college. Asymptomatic testing is an important tool for helping to break the chains of transmission of the virus and so students and pupils may go to school or college specifically for a test before Monday 8 March if their school or college offers to test them.

If a school or college chooses to start testing before Monday 8 March, they should still follow the [schools operational guidance](#) or [further education guidance](#).

Students must maintain social distance and **must go home after their test result if the test is before Monday 8 March.**

Students and pupils will still need to do 3 tests on-site (ATS), each 3 to 5 days apart, before moving to home-testing. Schools and colleges should not start home testing students and pupils before the week beginning Monday 15 March.

Schools and colleges will need to consider the transport implications of testing before Monday 8 March.

Schools will start receiving deliveries of test at home kits for staff from Wednesday 24 February. There is no need to place an order for them, deliveries will be made between Wednesday 24 February and Tuesday 2 March. From Monday 8 March, schools will automatically receive a re-stock of test at home kits so your pupils or students can collect them after their third test on-site at the school or college test site. Deliveries will be between Monday 8 March and Monday 15 March – again there is no need to place an order. The re-ordering process for test at home kits will be in place from Monday 15 March onwards.

Schools will receive a replenishment of ATS testing kits during the week beginning Monday 1 March to ensure you are ready to test pupils and students on-site at least 3 times when they return. Again, there is no need to place an order for ATS kits. For this reason, the secondary schools and colleges ATS test kit reordering process is currently closed. If you have an urgent need for further testing kits, you may place an order on Monday 1 March. Please follow this [link](#) to see the specific date on which your school or college will receive its test kits.

The frequently asked questions for secondary schools and colleges have been updated to reflect the above.

Surge Testing to Monitor and Suppress Spread of COVID-19 Variant

The government has [announced](#) that additional testing is being made available in a number of locations, including the CM13 postcode in Brentwood, as the COVID-19 variant first identified in South Africa has been found.

This will support existing extensive testing already in place, and testing will, in combination with following the lockdown rules and remembering ‘*Hands. Face. Space*’ help to monitor and suppress the spread of the virus, while enabling a better understanding of the new variant.

People living within the CM13 postcode area are strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 test when offered, whether they are showing symptoms or not.

Therefore, if you currently have staff that reside in one of those postcodes listed, you should avoid requiring them to come into work wherever possible, and if they do need to come into work for operational reasons, they should ensure that they are being tested regularly utilising the additional testing in their local area.

The local authority has already started to plan how it would mobilise this activity, should the area be extended to include Havering.

Further Guidance

All of the Department for Education’s [Coronavirus guidance for educational settings can be found on GOV.UK](#). This includes specific guidance on implementing protective measures, answers to frequently asked questions for schools and guidance on issues such as remote education, providing free school meals and attendance, among other things.

DfE coronavirus helpline

Telephone 0800 046 8687

If you have a query about Coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to schools and other educational establishments, and children's social care, in England contact the DfE helpline.

Lines are open from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, and 10am to 4pm at weekends. If you work in a school, please have your unique reference number (URN or UK PRN) available when calling the helpline.