

14 May 2021

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Dear Parents

We wanted to take this opportunity to remind you of the importance of regular lateral flow testing in order to reduce the spread of the virus and keep our schools and children safe at this time.

In order to help us identify these cases and prevent the spread of the virus, we are asking all parents and carers of school aged children to take twice weekly lateral flow testing, three to four days apart. Please note that one in three people have Covid-19 without symptoms and could be spreading it to others without knowing.

Even though you may have had the Covid-19 vaccine, which does reduce the risk of serious illness from Covid-19, it may not stop you catching or spreading the disease. It is therefore important to keep up regular testing in order to keep yourself and your loved ones safe. It is also worth noting that the vaccination can take up to three weeks to build up sufficient antibodies in your system.

There are several ways that you can access lateral flow testing in West Berkshire:

1. You can visit one of our static testing sites in Newbury, Burghfield, Thatcham, or the mobile testing site in Hungerford. No appointment is necessary to visit static testing sites but you can make one if you prefer. Use the following link to book an appointment or check timeslots and days of operation for testing sites <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/lft>
2. West Berkshire Council is also offering a Mobile Community Collect service, which travels through rural areas of the District at the same time and day each week and from where you can collect your free lateral flow home testing kit. The route schedule is available on the council's website: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/lateralflowtesting>
3. You can collect free lateral flow home testing kits from a pharmacy near to you. Just use the NHS Test and Trace link and enter your postcode and the closest pharmacy to your location will be identified <https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/>
4. You can order test kits for home delivery through [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). In most cases, these arrive the next day through Royal Mail.

5. If your child is a secondary school pupil, their place of study should be supplying lateral flow home test kits from their place of study. As soon as the test has been done, the result should be reported to NHS Test and Trace either online or by telephone as per the instructions in the home test kit. Pupils should also report their result, whether void, positive or negative, to their school to help with contact tracing.

If you work outside West Berkshire, it might be easier for you to check if there is a lateral flow testing site close to your workplace, using that local authority's website.

Finally, if you are already doing lateral flow testing through a work based programme, there is no need to do further testing.

We would like to thank you for your efforts so far, in protecting yourself and others in West Berkshire from the spread of the virus.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MP', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Matt Pearce

Service Director - Communities and Wellbeing