



6 May 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The school has been informed by Public Health England (PHE) and Barking and Dagenham Council that one coronavirus (COVID-19) case has been identified in Year 10 at the school that is related to a variant of concern first identified in India.

The risk of ongoing transmission in the year group is believed to be **low** as the school took all the necessary action at the point of notification and contacts were notified and self-isolated as necessary. However, as a precautionary measure, PHE and Barking and Dagenham Council would like to identify if there has been any asymptomatic transmission of COVID-19 by asking **all Year 10 students** to take a COVID-19 PCR test on **Monday 10th May 2021**.

These PCR tests are different to the normal lateral flow tests more commonly used as part of the routine asymptomatic testing in school. By using PCR testing, positive results can be sent for genomic sequencing at specialist laboratories, helping us to identify variant of concern cases and their spread.

This additional testing does not apply to any other year groups, so **if your child is not a student in Year 10, no action is required**.

All students and staff should continue using twice-weekly rapid testing as normal.

Please be assured we are following the national guidance about reducing the spread of infection and will continue to work closely with Barking and Dagenham Council and PHE as required.

Thank you for your support with this.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a long horizontal line, representing Mr Smith.

Mr Smith
Headteacher

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a PCR test and how is it performed?

- This is self-test. A sample is collected by inserting a long swab into the back of your throat and nose. A member of the testing team will be on site to offer advice on how to do the test and answer any questions.

Why aren't you using community test sites/lateral flow "rapid" tests?

- Genomic sequencing, which tells us whether a positive case is a variant or not, can only be conducted using a PCR test. We will also be deploying a new technology - known as 'genotype assay testing' – to rapidly detect new COVID mutations indicating whether positive test samples contain known variants. Genotype assay testing is compatible only with PCR tests.

Why isn't my child being offered a PCR test?

- The school have worked with PHE and Barking and Dagenham Council to conduct a risk assessment. Given the school policy for managing COVID-19, it was assessed that targeted testing for Year 10 was appropriate. We will continue to work with PHE and LBBD and will advise parents in the event we need to revisit those offered PCR testing.
- In addition, please do make sure that your child(ren) continue using twice-weekly rapid testing as normal.