



Monday 14 June 2021

Dear parents and carers

## Remote learning and mass testing of all students.

I am writing to you as in the last few days we have three positive COVID-19 cases in school across three different year groups and I have decided to take immediate action to reassure parents, students and staff.

If we had a high uptake of lateral flow tests and the reporting of outcomes I would not need to take this action. I am immensely grateful to those parents and students that have fully supported our efforts over the last few months. It is time to redouble our efforts collectively to address the current situation.

It has come to my attention that there has been extensive mixing of students in and across year groups over the weekend and this has led me to have to self-isolate a large group of students who are now a close contact of a positive case. You will be aware from the media of 'variants of concern' that have high transmissibility rates and you will also be aware of the increasing number of cases in our local area.

When students returned to school in March our uptake for COVID-19 testing in school was over 90%. Following a period of in-school testing until late March the reporting of home testing has dropped to just 25%. A larger proportion of students tell us they are completing the tests, but these are not being reported to the NHS to school. This does not give us confidence that COVID-19 is not being transmitted within our school community.

Therefore, we are **immediately implementing a mass testing programme** for all those that we have consent for to ensure we are doing all we can to reduce transmission. The implication of this is that we need to alter the rest of this week in order to complete the testing, which results in students in Years 7, 8 and 9 accessing remote learning for some of the week. This approach aims to stop your child from getting ill and to protect your family and our staff where full or any vaccination has yet to take place.

The programme of COVID testing, lessons in school and remote learning for the rest of this week is outlined in the table below. Please read it carefully as some year groups are not in school tomorrow.

Tuesday 15 June	Wednesday 16 June	Thursday 17 June	Friday 18 June
Y10 COVID testing. Y10 exams.	Y7 COVID testing. Y7 and 10 in school.	Y8 COVID testing. Y7, 8 and 10 in school.	Y9 COVID testing. All year groups in school. No remote learning.
Y7, 8, 9 remote learning. 'Live' form via MS Teams.	Y8 & 9 remote learning. 'Live' form via MS Teams.	Y9 remote learning. 'Live' form via MS Teams.	

Where your child is accessing remote learning, recorded lessons will be posted on SatchelOne in line with their normal school timetable. Please ensure they follow the timings of the normal school day.

In school, COVID testing will take place at the start of the school day as outlined in the table above.

In the event that your child tests positive on the lateral flow test in school, we will send them home. They will then need a PCR test. Instructions for this are on the next page. If your child is deemed to be a close contact of a positive case, we will send them home. They will need a PCR test. Instructions for this are on the next page.

I will update you later this week on the outcomes of this testing. As context, we have already had to ask nearly ninety students across three year groups to isolate in the last few days.

Yours faithfully

**Kieran Larkin**  
Headteacher

**CARING, LEARNING AND SUCCEEDING**

### **What to do if my child is deemed a close contact**

If your child is deemed to be a close contact of a positive case they will be sent home from school. You will be contacted beforehand via text and your child will be allowed to ring you.

The latest guidance issued from all Directors of Public Health in Greater Manchester is that close contacts should **book a PCR test** to support early identification of the variants of concern and to identify any further transmission between cases. Household members of those isolating can also book a PCR test.

This approach is intended to identify cases, including when people have no symptoms. This will help to identify and isolate cases, prevent onward transmission and minimise case rates in our local community. This will be kept under review and I will advise you as and when this is no longer required.

**To book a PCR test go to <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>**

You will be asked to identify whether you or your child has COVID symptoms. If there are no symptoms, select 'No' for this answer and proceed through the questions until the question: *Why are you asking for a test?*

You should select the box that says *'I've been told to get a test by my local council, health protection team or healthcare professional'*.

Then choose the option that states: *'My local council or health protection team has asked me to get a test, even though I do not have symptoms'*.

You will then be able to proceed to book a test.

Once again, I am grateful for your support in helping us manage the situation at school and collectively play our part in driving down transmission of coronavirus. I am sorry for the disruption caused.

Please let the school know the outcome of the PCR test (negative or positive) using [testresult@lowtonhs.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:testresult@lowtonhs.wigan.sch.uk).

**Kieran Larkin**  
Headteacher