

10 June 2021

Dear parents and carers

It was great to welcome children back into school this week after the half term break and I hope everyone benefited from the good weather over the holiday. Our schools are looking forward to a busy final term of the year with plans for sports days, musical performances and end of term celebrations. These may need to be held in a slightly different format this year but we very much hope that our students will be able to enjoy the events as much as ever, and they really do deserve it.

### **Delta Variant**

You will have seen that in some areas of the UK rates of infection have escalated significantly over the last 6 weeks, with the Variant of Concern ( Delta Variant) driving this increase. You may have already heard from your child's school about this and Bristol's Public Health team has asked us to pass on the message below.

We have been encouraged by the uptake of lateral flow (rapid) testing by school children, families, parents and carers to date and want to thank everyone who continues to participate: it remains a key way to contain infection levels.

All families are encouraged to be extra vigilant during this time and Public Health England recommend:

- Secondary school students should continue to carry out twice weekly lateral flow (rapid) testing; this helps to identify positive cases of the virus where people have no symptoms.
- Families should make full use of facilities across Bristol to carry out twice weekly lateral flow (rapid) testing; parents, carers and guardians can collect tests from local pharmacies, Bristol collection sites or by ordering on GOV.UK.
- If you or your child has symptoms of COVID-19 or get a positive lateral flow (rapid) test result, you must self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test.
- Anyone who is self-isolating because they have been in close contact with someone who's tested positive, should also book a PCR test to check whether they were also infected – however, they will still have to self-isolate for the full 10 days if they have a negative result.

As ever, if children are not feeling well, please consider carefully whether they need to be kept home, and if they or other family members develop COVID symptoms whilst at home, arrange a test. Please do continue to notify school of any requirement to isolate according to the procedures in place at your child's school. It is important that we are able to monitor any potential outbreaks and react to them as swiftly as possible.

## Symptoms

A reminder that the main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

About 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms but can still infect others. This is why lateral flow (rapid) testing is very important.

## Useful links

For more information about how and where to get lateral flow (rapid) tests, [visit the local authority website](#). If you have symptoms and need to book a PCR test, [visit GOV.UK](#).

Support is on offer through the We Are Bristol helpline for anyone who needs emergency assistance getting food, medicines or guidance about financial support to self-isolate. Call 0800 694 0184 for free if you need help.

## Summer holidays

Many of you will no doubt be looking forward to the summer holidays and starting to make plans. The DfE has asked us to remind you that strict rules on testing and quarantine remain in place for travel to 'amber' and 'red' countries and further information can be found in the [guidance on red, amber and green list rules for entering England](#). Please bear this in mind when making your plans.

I will be in touch again over the next few weeks with more details about end of year events but in the meantime I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support and understanding. We are very grateful and proud of the way that our community of schools including staff, students and parents and carers continue to work together during these challenging times.

Best wishes,



Neil Blundell  
Executive Principal, Cathedral Schools Trust