Town Hall
1 Town Square
Barking, IG11 7LU
Website: www.lbbd.gov.uk

15 December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Covid 19 testing for secondary school pupils who do not have symptoms (asymptomatic)

I am writing to you as your local Director of Public Health to let you know about the increase in Covid-19 testing, with a focus on secondary school-aged children.

Due to the increasing number of Covid-19 cases locally, we have been given priority to begin a programme of asymptomatic testing (for people not experiencing any symptoms). These tests will help to reduce the risk of people without symptoms unknowingly spreading the virus to others in the community.

To keep schools safe and protect the wider community, all students in years 11, 12 and 13 must get a test between Monday 28 and Thursday 31 December before they return to school. Data has shown that rates amongst this age group are particularly high. Staff in schools are also required to get tested before the new term.

We also strongly encourage students in other year groups and anyone they live with to get a Covid-19 test before students go back to school in January, to make sure that anyone who may be infectious does not return to school with the virus and potentially start an outbreak.

How do I book a test if I don't have symptoms?

Go to the government website www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test where you'll be asked some questions. Select the following options:

- NO to essential worker
- NO to having symptoms
- NO to being part of a trial or pilot
- YES - **My local council or health protection team has asked me (or someone I live with) to get a test, even though I do not have symptoms**

You can book your whole family by choosing 'add family members'.

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I can't get to a testing centre, can we get tested at home?

Yes, you can ask to receive your test by post. When you are making your booking, answer 'Yes' to 'Is the person who needs a test part of a trial or government pilot project' and select the option that says 'The person is taking part in community testing'.

What should I do if my child, or someone in our household, tests positive?

If you receive a positive test result, have symptoms of Covid-19, or if you've had contact with someone who has, self-isolation is the only way to guarantee you won't pass the virus on to others.

If you have to isolate, you should start the 10 day self-isolation period straight away.

My child has tested positive recently, do they need to take another test?

If your child has tested positive in the last 90 days, they should not take another test as the dead virus may still show in their system, even if they have recovered.

What if my family is already self-isolating?

If you've been asked to self-isolate by the NHS Test and Trace Programme or by our Public Health team you can still get tested by ordering a home testing kit. You still need to complete your period of self-isolation, even if you test negative as symptoms can take 10 days to show.

More information can be found on the government's website.

Thank you for your support during these difficult times. Covid-19 is still taking people's lives but your efforts will help us stop the spread.

Yours faithfully,

Matthew Cole
Director of Public Health

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