



7 June 2021

Dear Parent, Guardian

Additional Covid-19 testing at Maiden Erlegh School in Reading

The number of COVID-19 cases is increasing, particularly the variant first identified in India/originating in India, now known as 'Delta'. Reading has a higher number of cases per 100,000 people, compared with the national average, and the number of cases has risen by 64% over the past week. As you may already know, Reading Borough Council will be carrying out additional ('surge') Covid-19 testing of people aged 12 or over living, studying or working in the following postcodes over the period Monday 7 June – Sunday 20 June:

- RG1 3**
- RG1 5**
- RG1 6**
- RG1 7**

The tests will be PCR tests and will allow Public Health England to see if there are any cases of the variant in our school. There is currently no evidence that this variant causes more severe illness or that it makes vaccines less effective. The Government believes that the Delta variant is more transmissible than the previous one, in other words it passes more easily from person to person. Although the risk to the wider community is considered low, as a precaution, Reading Borough Council, working in collaboration with Public Health England and NHS Test and Trace, is taking swift and decisive action to deploy additional surge testing in the targeted area.

Further information on surge testing for variants of Covid 19 is available [here](#).

All students attending the school will receive a PCR test later this week. This must be taken at home and **returned to school the following morning**. We are unable to specify at this stage when the tests will be handed out as we are awaiting delivery. We will inform parents when the tests are handed to students.

We strongly encourage everyone over the age of 12 living, working or studying in the postcodes above to undertake a test. Tests for others in the household can be taken at local test centres. No appointment is necessary. Details of the test centres are available [here](#).

If your child or any members of the household are displaying symptoms, you should seek a test [here](#) and self-isolate as per government guidance.

I have included some further information as FAQ's below. Please contact me via meroffice@maidenerleghtrust.org should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Foster
Business Manager
Maiden Erlegh School in Reading

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a PCR test and how is it performed?

It is a self test. A sample is collected by inserting a long swab into the back of your throat and nose (in the same way as for a lateral flow test).

2. Why are PCR tests being used instead of using the lateral flow home tests already in place?

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.

3. Should I still carry out the lateral flow tests at home?

Yes – the PCR tests provided this week are a one-off. It is extremely important that as many students continue to carry out the twice weekly lateral flow home tests. This is for the safety of our wider school community.

4. Do I need to report my result?

Instructions will be provided with the test kit, detailing how to register the kit. Once registered, the results will be sent to you directly. If the result is positive, please notify us via the office email address (meroffice@maidenerleghtrust.org). Your child and the rest of the household will then need to isolate for 10 days. If the result is negative, you do not need to report the result of this test to the school.

5. Does my child have to take a test in order to be able to come to school?

No – this is advisory, not compulsory. We do however strongly encourage that everybody living, working or studying in the postcodes above takes a PCR test for the safety of our wider school community. This includes anybody who has been vaccinated. As a community, we must continue to work together to reduce transmission rates.

6. Can my child come to school if we are awaiting the results of the PCR test?

Students can attend school when waiting for the results of this PCR test as long as they and the rest of the household remain symptom free. For any tests taken outside of this scheme due to displaying symptoms, students must wait for the test results before they can return to school.

7. Can my child receive a test if I have not previously provided consent?

Yes – tests will be provided to every student in school. We do not need your consent as the test will be undertaken at home.

8. What happens if my child is absent?

There will only be a very limited window for the test to be facilitated by the school. If your child is absent, you can take your child to a local test centre. If you would prefer to take your child to a local test centre rather than carry out the test at home, you can turn up at a local centre without an appointment and request a PCR test.