

2nd December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

After the news about the new COVID-19 variant called Omicron, we know you will have many questions.

We will not be able to answer all of those until a little more time has passed to let the scientists learn more about the variant. But we do know now that we will all have to be more careful to keep ourselves, our families and our schools safe.

Government guidance has changed for transport, shops and schools to reflect this. Newham schools and other education settings are working to keep our activities and buildings as safe as possible.

You have an important role too.

We know masks and face coverings help to stop the spread.

In Newham we are asking everyone to help us all stay safe by:

1. **Getting all the necessary doses of vaccine when you and your children are eligible** – it will help protect you and those around you. Even with the arrival of this Omicron variant, having the full vaccine course will give you more protection than not having the vaccine. It's not too late to get your first dose of the vaccine, whenever you became eligible.
2. **Wear your face covering** or a medical mask:
 - a. When you are visiting school
 - b. When on public transport, in shops and other public spaces which are crowded or have limited airflow
 - c. In health and care settings
3. **Get tested:**
 - a. Twice a week with rapid tests (lateral flow tests). You can get these free from libraries and chemists.
 - b. Test with a PCR if you have symptoms - and this can be any cold or flu symptoms.

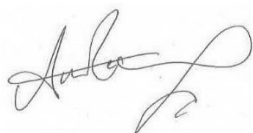
What are the symptoms? With each new variant symptoms may change so act early if you have:

- COVID-19 classic symptoms - a raised temperature, a new cough, loss of or change to taste or smell
- DELTA symptoms - a runny nose, sore throat, headache, sneezing, loss of smell
- OMICRON symptoms may be different - excess tiredness, aches and pains, sore throat.


4. **Stay at home** if you test positive for COVID-19 or are a contact of someone with Omicron. **You will be advised by the UK Health Security Agency if there is a confirmed case of the Omicron variant.**
- If someone in your house has COVID-19 – but not Omicron – everyone should take a PCR test and if they are negative, you can go to work and your child can continue going to school.
 - Your child should carry on attending school but take a daily lateral flow test while there is someone at home with COVID-19 – but not Omicron.
 - There is still support in Newham to help you isolate/stay at home. Phone the COVID-19 helpline on 020 7473 9711
5. **Be Kind:** We know this is stressful and people react differently – if we support each other and work together we can get through winter with this new variant safely.

Information on where and how to get COVID-19 tests and book vaccinations is here:
<https://www.newham.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-advice-support>

Thank you



Anita Stewart
Director of Education, Inclusion & Achievement

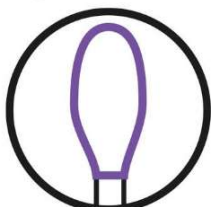


Jason Strelitz
Director of Public Health



KEEPING SAFE

- Wear your face covering
- Keep a distance
- Test regularly
- Isolate if positive
- Get your vaccine



People at the Heart
of Everything We Do

WE ARE NEWHAM.

People at the Heart
of Everything We Do