

SG/kb

14th May 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you are all well.

Unfortunately, as you may be aware, a number of cases of the COVID-19 variant known as B.1.617.2 (first identified in India), have been positively identified in Milton Keynes, Bedford, Aylesbury and Buckingham. There is concern that this variant may transmit more easily than the standard strain that had been circulating locally. Cases of this variant are increasing, and there has been a rapid rise in cases overall, particularly amongst school-aged children, including at least two secondary schools in Milton Keynes this week.

Until the full picture of how widespread this new variant is locally, and to ensure we can help control this new variant, students and staff will continue to wear masks in classrooms and in school. Particularly as a number of students and staff live in some of the identified areas where the new variant is prevalent. All current preventative measures will stay in place.

We will review it at the end of next week but at present masks will remain for all until half term. It is not ideal and it feels like one step forward and two back but until the new variant is under control locally it is prudent to maintain the safety precautions we have in place at present. The emergence of this new strain locally, and the speed with which it has spread already, is a reminder that we must all continue to do what we can to control the spread of the virus. It is imperative that students continue to self-test twice a week using the tests the school have provided.

We will work closely with MK Public Health regarding this issue and below is an important message from **Vicky Head, Director of Public Health**:

To limit the spread in school settings, there are three key things that you can do to help:

1. Continue to be vigilant for symptoms of Covid-19

Please be vigilant for symptoms of COVID-19 and keep your child at home if unwell. If this happens, then please self-isolate and book a PCR test at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.

2. Continue to participate in regular LFD testing

Everyone in Milton Keynes is encouraged to take up the offer of twice weekly testing. People without symptoms can drop into our rapid test centre at MK Central Library. No appointment is needed and results usually come back in less than an hour. You can also collect 14 free rapid test kits when you visit Central Library or from local pharmacies.

3. If you (as a parent/carer) are eligible for vaccination, book this promptly.

The students continue to amaze us with their resilience and I am sure, as they have always done, they will put this disappointment behind them and look forward to the changes that, hopefully, can be implemented after half term to make their experience at school more positive.

Thank you for your support with this. Hopefully, the sun will come out and we will hear some good news regarding this new variant soon to cheer us all up!

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Glover', written in a cursive style.

Mr Stuart Glover
Acting Headteacher