



Edmonton County School

Educating our Community for Success

14th July 2021

New School Year Arrangements, September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you and your families continue to be safe and well. With the end of term rapidly approaching, I am writing to you regarding the arrangements for the new academic year, starting in September.

On Monday 12th July, the Government confirmed that Step 4 of the 'roadmap for leaving lockdown' will go ahead from 19th July. Guidance for schools from September has also been published:

[Schools guidance Step 4 update](#)

A key part of the Government's plans for a safe return to school after the summer holidays is the mass testing of all secondary pupils and staff prior to their return to the classroom using 'lateral flow tests'. This is a similar approach to the one taken when schools re-opened in March. Pupils will be tested twice at school when they return. This means that at Edmonton County we will need to conduct over 3000 separate tests! Therefore, this will mean a 'staggered' start to school re-opening, which is outlined in the schedule below.

Lateral flow test frequently asked questions (FAQs):

How many lateral flow tests will pupils have?

Year 7-13 pupils will be tested twice at school (see the schedule below). After these two tests, parents will be provided with home testing kits (by the school) which should be used twice weekly. **No further tests will be carried out at school.**

Do I need to provide consent for my child/ren to have lateral flow tests?

Yes. Most parents have already completed online consent forms (in March). For parents of students new to the school, and those who have not previously given consent, this online consent form needs to be completed: <https://forms.office.com/r/8jA7kDtZDP> For pupils younger than 16 years, consent must be provided by the parent/carer. Students over 16 can complete this form themselves, having discussed participation with their parent/carer if under 18. If parents want to withdraw consent, then they should contact info@edact.org.uk

Is testing compulsory?

No, testing is not compulsory, but it is strongly advised. This is about the safety of all of our students, their family members and staff. If students come to school who have COVID-19 asymptotically, this can lead to other students and staff becoming ill, impacting on everybody's safety and the education of large numbers of students.

What is involved in a lateral flow test?

These tests involve pupils taking their own throat and nose swabs (guidance will be available on our school website shortly) whilst trained staff oversee the process and analyse the results. Results are obtained after about half an hour, so the whole process takes less than 45 minutes, including registration. You can find more information about this type of test using the following link: [Understanding lateral flow antigen testing for people without symptoms - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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What happens if my child's lateral flow test (either taken in school or at home) is positive?

Students with a positive lateral flow test result must self-isolate (as should all members of their household) and will need to get a free PCR test, continuing to self-isolate whilst awaiting the result. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the lateral flow test and the student can return to school, as long as they don't have COVID-19 symptoms.

What do I do if my child has COVID-19 symptoms?

Mass testing in schools is for asymptomatic cases of the virus only. If your child is displaying symptoms of COVID-19, they must not attend school until they have received a negative test result from the more reliable external PCR test. Your family must continue to follow NHS and government guidance on self-isolation and testing where symptoms of COVID are present. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are well known (cough, fever and loss or change of taste or smell) but more recently we had students testing positive after displaying a range of symptoms including headaches, stomach cramps, runny nose or diarrhoea.

If in any doubt, please keep your child off school and get a more reliable external PCR test at:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/

Does my child still need to self-isolate if someone in our household has COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive?

Yes. If someone in your household has COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive, the entire household must self-isolate for 10 days (or until a negative PCR test result is obtained) from the start of symptoms or the date of the positive test result, whichever is earliest.

Returning to school in September

The Government's updated guidance means that we have had to alter our plans for the first week of term so that there is time for the lateral flow tests to be completed. The *current* schedule for students returning to school and having lateral flow tests is as follows, although this is subject to change. Further information about appointment times and induction days will be provided shortly via the school website.

Date	Event	Lateral flow tests (timings to be confirmed)
Tue 31st Aug	School closed except for lateral flow tests	1st test: Years 7, 8, Sixth Form Appointment times to be confirmed
Wed 1st Sep	INSET Day 1 (school closed to students)	1st test: Years 9, 10, 11 Appointment times to be confirmed
Thu 2nd Sep	INSET Day 2 (school closed to students)	
Fri 3rd Sep	Years 7&8 Induction Day 8:25am-3pm Year 12 Enrolment / Induction 9am-12pm Year 13 Induction 12pm-3pm	2nd test: Years 7, 8, Sixth Form during the school day
Mon 6th Sep	Years 9, 10, 11 return (all Years in school) 8:25am start for Years 7-12 9am start for Year 13	2nd test: Years 9, 10, 11 during the school day

Please note that the 2nd test will be taken during school hours once pupils have returned.

Keeping everybody safe

The Government's COVID-19 guidance for schools has changed for the new academic year. [Schools guidance Step 4 update](#) As well as the guidance on page 2 of this letter, please note that:

Measures removed from September 2021 are:

- 'Bubbles' will no longer be required in schools, and so we will not need to split the school site into 'zones' for each year group. This means that we can return to a situation where students move around the school to each of their lessons, and can have access to all our specialist facilities.
- The school day will return to 'normal' – there will be no staggered start or finish to the school day. For Years 7-10, 12&13 the school day will be 8:25am to 3:00pm; for Year 11 the school day will be 8:25am to 4:00pm. After-school detentions finish by 4pm at the latest.
- Schools will no longer need to undertake contact tracing for a suspected or COVID-19 case – this will be the responsibility of NHS Track and Trace.
- Students will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case; they will be advised to take a PCR test instead. This means the school will no longer be asking 'bubbles' to self-isolate at home.
- Social distancing will no longer be required
- Face coverings will no longer be advised for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. We will be providing further guidance regarding face masks in August.

Measures still in place in September:

- Ensuring good hygiene for everyone – regular use of hand sanitizer and anti-viral wipes
- Enhanced cleaning regimes around the school.
- Keeping all occupied spaces well ventilated.
- Promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- Lateral flow home-test kits provided for all students to use twice weekly.

Please see [Step 4 update - what parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges](#) for further details.

Thank you for your continued support. I am sure that by working together we can continue to keep our community as safe as possible as we return to a more 'normal' school year in September. If you have any questions or concerns about the content of this letter, please contact info@edact.org.uk with any enquiries.

Yours faithfully,



Mr Paul Miller, Head of School