

Office of the Medical Officer of Health  
19-21 Broad Street | St Helier  
Jersey | JE2 3RR

Friday, 22 October 2021

Dear staff in nurseries, schools and colleges,

I would like to start by thanking you for your continued support, which has been a key factor in keeping the spread of COVID-19 low within schools and therefore ensuring that children in the Island are able to continue with face-to-face learning.

I am particularly grateful to 6,685 students and staff who have already registered as part of the Lateral Flow Test (LFT) scheme this term. We have received more than 18,000 test results to date. We must continue to push these figures up – LFTs are the best way of keeping children in learning while keeping us all safe. For staff still yet to join the LFT scheme, this can be done by registering on gov.je

### **Lateral Flow Tests during Half Term and before returning to school**

Twice-weekly testing and reporting is important as it means that we can identify positive cases and reduce the spread of COVID. It is vital that we do not lose this momentum during half term when Islanders are likely to be mixing in social groups and spending more time with friends and family.

I have sent a letter to parents and students encouraging eligible secondary school and college students to maintain the twice-weekly lateral flow testing throughout half term, and the same applies to all nursery, school and college staff.

Please continue to test twice a week during your half term break, particularly before visiting vulnerable family members or friends, or before mixing with groups of people who you wouldn't frequently spend time with.

It is also important that staff and students take a lateral flow test and submit the results online before returning to school on Monday, 1 November. Around 1 in 3 people with COVID do not experience any symptoms so LFTs are an important tool to detect cases quickly and ensure that we do not transmit the virus to students and staff.

### **Flu vaccination**

It is possible there will be higher levels of flu this winter, given the virus was in low circulation last season due to the reduction in international travel and the measures introduced to limit spread of respiratory viruses, so I encourage you to receive the flu vaccine when it is offered to you.

### **Symptoms**

As we are entering flu season, it is essential that we all remain vigilant for COVID-19 symptoms which are often similar to flu symptoms. Please be reminded of the three classic main symptoms of COVID-19: a new continuous cough, fever/high temperature and a change or loss of smell and/or taste. Other symptoms may also be seen – please see website on gov.je

If you or a child in your care develops any of the symptoms above, please isolate immediately and book a PCR test online or call the Coronavirus helpline on 0800 735 5566 as soon as possible.

I would like to thank you all once again for your tremendous and continued efforts in keeping our education settings safe spaces for our children and young people. I wish you an enjoyable, safe and relaxing half term break.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ivan Muscat', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Dr Ivan Muscat MBE**  
**Deputy Medical Officer of Health**