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Date: 27 May 2021

**Dear parent/carer/guardian,**

Firstly, I'd like to thank you for all you are doing to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 and encourage you to continue with your efforts to protect yourself, your loved ones and the whole school community.

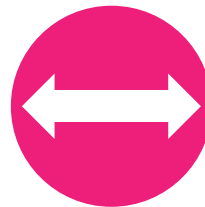
As you will no doubt be aware we now have confirmed cases of the Indian variant, which can spread more easily, in Derbyshire.

While there's no evidence that this strain causes a more serious illness and the vaccine remains highly effective against it, it does mean we cannot afford to let our guard down.

So please remember:



**HANDS**  
Wash hands  
more regularly.



**SPACE**  
Keep apart from  
people not in your  
household or bubble.



**FACE**  
Wear a face covering  
unless exempt.



**FRESH AIR**  
keep rooms well  
ventilated if meeting  
up to 6 people indoors.

If you or anyone in your household has any of the three main symptoms – a new, continuous cough, a high temperature or loss or change to sense of taste or smell – **you must self-isolate immediately** and book a test online at [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or ring **NHS 119**.

**Please do not send your child to school while you wait for the results and if your child or anyone in your household tests positive it is important you self-isolate for 10 days and tell school straight away.**

## Getting tested

If your child is at a secondary school they will receive free rapid tests from school to test themselves at home twice a week.

It is also really important that everyone else in your household gets tested regularly as 1 in 3 people have the virus without any symptoms and could be spreading it.

We have community testing centres across Derbyshire where you can get a quick, free test. Find out more here: [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/communitytesting](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/communitytesting)

You can pick up free rapid tests to use at home from our centres and local pharmacies or you can order them from [www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests](http://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests)

## Supporting school

Staff at your school have worked incredibly hard to keep your children safe during the pandemic and it's important that we all do our bit to support them.

Measures to reduce risks like staggered start and finish times, encouraging regular hand washing and ensuring classrooms are well ventilated are all helping to stop the spread.

I realise these past few months have been hard for your children but having students in smaller 'bubbles' reduces the number of people who may need to isolate if there is a positive case in school.

We know the virus spreads more when people are close together – and we know the new Indian variant spreads more easily. An infected person can pass on the virus through talking, breathing, coughing or sneezing even if they do not have any symptoms.

When you are with people you do not live with, and to avoid contracting the virus or passing it on, you should:

- Stay 2 metres apart whenever possible
- Avoid standing in groups at the school gates

I realise that as restrictions are eased it's hard to keep going but with cases of the Indian variant on the rise across the country it's really important we don't let our guard down.

Thanks for helping to keep everyone safe

Yours sincerely



**Dean Wallace**  
**Director of Public Health for Derbyshire**