



Date: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021  
Your Ref: TH/SS/LB

Dear parents and carers

## Reinstatement of face coverings for pupils in communal areas – June 2021

I'm writing to you to ask for your help in keeping the infection rate in South Tyneside as low as possible. Since half-term we have seen a rise in the number of positive COVID-19 cases in our communities. We want to act fast to try to halt the new variant of concern now named 'Delta' which early evidence suggests it transmits more easily than over variants.

Therefore, as a precautionary measure I'm asking that pupils at the school wear face coverings again in communal areas. This is especially important in congested areas such as corridors. Face coverings should be worn by staff and visitors in situations indoors, outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible.

At this stage I'm not proposing that face coverings should be worn by pupils in the classrooms, however, if some pupils feel they wish to wear them than please feel free to do so.

I want to reassure you that the Public Health Team is working closely with schools across our borough to try to avoid as much disruption as possible.

It is important to remember that while there is much attention on face coverings the existing control measures including twice weekly testing of both parents, pupils and staff remain hugely important to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Please continue to test and remember that free lateral flow testing kits can be collected from pharmacies and local community sites, or order online at <https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/> or by phone for home delivery.

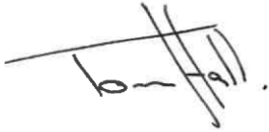
It's also important that the test results – whether positive or negative – are reported to the NHS and not just the school so that the spread of the virus can be monitored. I would therefore encourage you to report online at [www.gov.uk/report-covid19-results](http://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-results)



Vaccines remain the best protection we have against COVID-19, including this variant. The vaccination programme is progressing quickly and I would urge you to come forward and have your vaccine when eligible.

Finally, I want to thank you all for your continued efforts in helping to ensure our schools stay open and our pupils continue to get the best education possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Hall', with a horizontal line above it and several vertical strokes to the right.

Tom Hall  
Director of Public Health