

**21<sup>st</sup> June 2021**

**Year 11+ who are still in school**

Dear parent,

Covid-19 cases in Newcastle have risen sharply, and are now the highest in Staffordshire. Most of these cases are the more transmissible Delta Variant of Concern, and we are seeing the highest rates amongst people in the 11-18 and 18-33 age-range.

Testing is the best way of finding more positive cases, and seeing how this variant is spreading. It is also important as it allows us to isolate cases, trace their contacts and stop the spread in its tracks.

To help detect more cases, we will be carrying out more PCR testing of school pupils from Tuesday 22 to Friday 25 June in a similar way that schools have previously completed Lateral Flow Testing. Testing will take place in school, and any positive tests will be sent for genotyping, to see if there are any more cases of the Delta Covid-19 Variant in schools.

If you do not wish for your child to take part, please let your local school know by responding to the letter texted to you on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June.

We are also advising schools to reintroduce the wearing of face coverings for all pupils until the end of term.

I know many parents are working hard to ensure their children follow the rules around hands, face, space and fresh air, and it is important that we remain vigilant continue to follow these guidelines.

We have done so much over the past few weeks to keep Covid-19 cases low. We need to keep this going. The more information we get about the spread of the variant, the more we can do to stop it in its tracks and get back to doing the things we enjoy.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr. Richard Harling**

**Director of Health and Care**

**Staffordshire County Council**

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