



10<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that your family had a good break and that you made the most of the glorious sunshine we had in the second week of the half term holidays. We now embark on our final half term of the year, in which we begin to prepare your children for the next stage in their education and support them with this transition. This is a particularly important time of year and after much disruption over the course of the last two academic years, due to the pandemic, we very much need all children in school for the entirety of the term. With this in mind, I would like to reinvigorate my previous communications and messages to you regarding our collective responsibility to support the government in its mission to get the virus under control and drive the infection rate down.

You will no doubt have seen the news that Greater Manchester and Lancashire have been given additional measures and support by the government following a substantial rise in the delta (Indian) variant of the virus. It is becoming increasingly possible that, if the R rate stays as high as it is now, it will mean us remaining under restrictions whilst the rest of the country will see them lifted. Most recent data shows that the R rate in Greater Manchester is 209 per 100,000 (and rising), and across the rest of England it is only 44 per 100k. In Tameside, the rates have quadrupled over the last couple of weeks.

I have noted the increasing number of parents/carers coming to school without a mask or face covering and this is – understandably – may be because we all felt like things seemed to be getting back to normal. However, whilst I can't enforce the wearing of face-coverings outdoors, I must remind you that this expectation is part of our school risk assessment and control measures as directed by The Enquire Learning Trust. We have also been advised by the local Director of Population Health to continue being disciplined in all measures, including the wearing of face coverings around the school site, to reduce risks from the virus and drive transmission rates down.

I am therefore urging you all to think carefully about putting your masks on at drop-off/pick-up times. None of us wants to be held under further restrictions and it seems such a small sacrifice to make for the likelihood of the greater good. Staff will continue to remind you about face coverings at my request and I ask that you are respectful when they do so as this is part of us working together to continue the good work we have spent so long on for our children to continue their education and keep our families, friends and community safe. I do not expect any of you to raise this issue with other parents. We could all do without conflict and confrontation after such a traumatic period for us all. Be kind, but think carefully about what you would like to happen on 21st June.





# DOWSON PRIMARY ACADEMY

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In addition, I would expect that, in line with the whole region, surge-testing and surge-vaccination will be made available across Tameside. I would strongly advise you to take advantage should the chance arise. I have noted the positive impact on staff as large numbers of them have now been vaccinated and are regularly using the lateral flow tests twice-weekly to ensure confidence in keeping our setting as safe as possible.

However, if all of this isn't hitting home, let me tell you that, since the end of last term, we have had a sharp increase in the number of pupils absent in relation to positive covid cases. These are the first positive cases we have had within our school community for a considerable time. Whilst these cases didn't affect school reopening, any further cases will likely mean class closures and none of us wants this, least of all your children.

Let's do what we can to push down the R rate and get back to normal.

As ever, your support is very much valued.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Kathryn Thornburn  
Principal

