



# Northumberland County Council

**Your ref:**  
**Our ref:**  
**Enquiries to:**  
**Email:**  
**Tel direct:**  
**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

We wanted to write to you to thank you for all you have done to support our schools since their return in October.

It has been a difficult time for children, young people and their families, but it is thanks to your continued support that our schools have been able to continue providing much-needed learning.

Unfortunately, the pandemic is not over and the rate of positive cases in school age children remains high, meaning schools need to maintain the measures put in place after half-term.

Recently a new variant of the virus has been identified which has resulted in the Government reintroducing some additional measures within our communities and in Special, Middle, Secondary and High schools.

## Symptoms and testing

To further help reduce transmission within our communities it remains critical that anyone showing symptoms gets a PCR test and isolates.

The symptoms to look out for are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal



**Wellbeing and Community Health Services Group**  
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If your child is showing any of the above symptoms, or you are unsure please do book a PCR test for them. This will provide you with some reassurance, but also further protect your family and those you or your child are in contact with should you receive a positive result.

Please also continue to follow the basic guidance such as regularly washing hands, giving people space and opening windows and doors for better ventilation in buildings.

### **Guidance to schools**

Due to the new variant of the virus and increased cases across Northumberland we are advising schools to think about the measures they have in place for school events such as parents' evenings, assemblies, Christmas parties and performances.

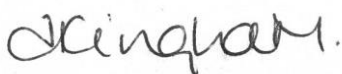
We are advising schools to not invite external visitors, including parents and carers into schools for these occasions. We understand this is disappointing, but our schools have a duty to protect all children and staff as a priority.

We are supporting schools in ensuring measures are in place to ensure the safety of pupils and staff.

We want your children to enjoy the last few weeks of term and for you as a family to be able to enjoy your Christmas break and spend time with loved ones, but to do so we must all take the necessary steps to protect ourselves and others.

Once again, we thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



**Audrey Kingham**  
**Director of Education & Skills**



**Elizabeth Morgan**  
**Interim Executive Director for Public  
Health and Community Services**

