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Ref: EdCom/Schools/Letters

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Dear Parents and Carers,

I want to congratulate and thank all the children and young people and their families who are playing an important part in keeping infection levels in schools and in the community low and decreasing.

You will have heard the Prime Minister's announcement on Monday that face coverings are no longer required for children and young people in schools from Monday 17 May. I'm sure this is a welcome change for young people, and it is part of the road map out of Covid 19.

It's important to remember that the virus has not gone away. Almost all of the other protective arrangements in school set out in Government guidance stay in place for the time being. There are many tools to keep all of us safe from Covid-19 – regular free testing, effective vaccines, practising the simple but powerful prevention measures of good ventilation – space – face – hands and fresh air, and following the current restrictions in place.

In Barking and Dagenham, we have had to respond rapidly to occasional cases of the variants first identified in India, Brazil and South Africa, which have been detected across the capital. In a city of London's size, population density, mobility and international travel links, variants are likely to be part of how we live with Covid-19 so it's key that we adapt and respond to the changing nature of the virus in a way that works for our residents and our schools.

Please continue to support the arrangements that schools have in place to reduce infection levels including wearing a face covering for bringing your child to school and picking up at the end of the day.

All the steps that you, your children, families, and schools have taken to suppress the virus over the last months have been very effective. It is more important than ever that we continue with them as we carefully return to normal life.

With thanks and best wishes

Yours sincerely,



Matthew Cole
Director Public Health