

**Sally Robinson, Director**

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Our Ref: SR/JO/695  
Your Ref:



9 December 2020

Dear Parent/carer

As we approach the end of the autumn term we would like to thank you all for your continued support for schools in managing what has been a very challenging time as we have seen the numbers of positive COVID 19 cases rise in Hartlepool. Schools have worked incredibly hard to do everything necessary to stay open whilst at the same time, keeping pupils and staff safe. Schools have worked with the Council's Public Health team to identify and isolate positive cases and close contacts of those cases quickly and worked 7 days per week to make sure they reduce the risk of spreading the virus. As always our admiration and thanks go to Headteachers and their staff for their commitment and dedication to doing everything within their powers to keep the children and young people of Hartlepool safe.

This Christmas will be different for all of us and it is vitally important that we all do everything we can to reduce the risk of spreading the COVID 19 virus within our community and protect our most vulnerable. We must not forget the important message of Hands, Face, Space, as this is the best way to prevent the virus from spreading. When families are together over Christmas, it is essential that you try to continue to maintain social distancing, whenever possible, to keep everyone safe. This will help to prevent a further spike in cases in Hartlepool in January.

If you or a member of your household tests positive over the Christmas period, you must continue to follow the self-isolation rules. For the person who is positive, this means they must isolate for 10 days after the onset of symptoms and not have contact with other people outside of their household. For close contacts of the person who tested positive, this means that they must isolate for 14 days in case they contract the virus. During this time, you should not leave the house for any reason. At Christmas time, this can be particularly hard, but unfortunately, this year, it is vital that we all follow these rules.

Looking forward to the start of the new term in January, the local authority and Hartlepool schools will continue to work together to support and prioritise the education and care of our children. Even with the good news that a vaccine is being rolled out nationally, this will take a long time and we must continue to manage the spread of the virus in the meantime. If everybody acts responsibly to reduce the transmission of the virus by continuing to follow the guidelines, we can reduce the disruption to our children's education keeping children in school where they are safe, happy and learning.

Wishing you all a happy and safe Christmas.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sally Robinson'.

Sally Robinson  
Director, Children and Joint Commissioning Services

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Craig Blundred'.

Craig Blundred  
Director of Public Health