

East Berkshire Director of Public Health,

Time Square,

Market Street,

Bracknell

11<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Dear Parent,

### **Covid-19 Variants of Concern (VoCs)**

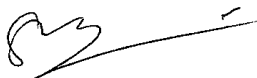
As you may know from recent reports, we are experiencing a rise in COVID cases in the Slough area mainly due to the Delta Variant (formerly known as the Indian Variant). Current evidence indicates that this variant is more transmissible than the original one; in other words it passes more easily from person to person, hence the concern about the rise in cases.

We have been asked to take part in additional testing (known as “surge testing”), using a 'PCR test' which is processed in a laboratory. These tests allow Public Health England to see if there are any cases of the variant in schools, nurseries, colleges, in a business or in the community. There is currently no evidence that this variant causes more severe illness or that it makes vaccines less effective.

All schools across Slough will be taking part in the surge testing programme, but delivery will be staggered over a period of 3 weeks. Some schools will be given a higher priority due to a recent outbreak. This letter is to make you aware of the plans. In Secondary Schools and Colleges, staff and pupils will receive a test, take it home, perform the test and bring it back the next day for it to be picked up. In Primary Schools and Nurseries we will be testing staff only. Please await further communication from your child's school or College as to when this will be.

I appreciate this has been an exceptionally difficult time for parents and children and we really do appreciate all the hard work that has been done in keeping the spread of this virus down. The plan is that high numbers of tests done during surge testing will mean we should start to see case rates going back down again.

Yours sincerely,



Stuart Lines

Director Public Health East Berkshire

### Further information:

Information on Surge Testing: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/surge-testing-for-new-coronavirus-covid-19-variants> - GOV.UK

Information on self-isolation: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>