



Dear Parent/Carer,

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING FACE MASKS

I am sure that earlier this week you heard the announcement from the Prime Minister Boris Johnson that secondary aged school children no longer need to wear face coverings in school. The guidance schools have received from the Department of Education has also been very clear on this matter. However, I personally wanted to take an opportunity to clarify with you our individual school expectations and responsibilities in this regard, which I hope you will find reassuring and supportive.

All our current mitigating actions will be maintained for example: hand washing, cleaning regimes, one-way systems, ventilation, student bubbles, visitor routines, and social distancing. All staff and pupils must comply with these prevention measures as we continue to work together to keep our school community safe.

In the classroom:

The wearing of the masks in the classroom will no longer be a mandatory requirement. However, anyone that wishes to continue to wear a mask is encouraged to do so. Staff are still required to stay in the designated areas and reduce their circulation and may be wearing a mask. Pupils have previously had allowance to wear coats in the classroom, this is no longer the case.

Communal areas:

In all other areas outside of the classroom environment pupils are expected to wear masks when they cannot effectively socially distance. This means that in all indoor communal areas the expectation is that students should wear their masks. Outside in the fresh air pupils do not need to wear a mask, but again anyone wishing to do so is welcome.

Home testing:

As we know the easing of restrictions, by the Government, has been enabled by a range of measures including social distancing, use of PPE, handwashing and so on. Asymptomatic testing 'home testing' has also been used to help to break the chains of transmission of the virus, and to help safeguard the health of pupils and staff. Home testing will therefore continue for the foreseeable future and we would welcome your ongoing support both this and with self-isolation, when required, so that we break the chain of transmission and protect our local community.

Public transport:

The rules and expectations on public transport have not changed and so it remains mandatory for pupils to wear their masks.

This initial change is hopefully the first step in the easing of restrictions. It is however critical that other measures are maintained to avoid any reversals. In the last 24 hours you will be aware of the Government's anxiety about the new variant of COVID and the emerging possibility that should a significant new outbreak happen, that local changes may be introduced. We are therefore keeping all measures under constant review and reviewing our risk assessments.

If we need to change our expectations, we will of course communicate those changes and the rationale as early as possible.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank you for your tremendous support to date with the measures we have had to implement over the last 12 months. If you have any queries or questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully,

Damian Belshaw
Head of School