

5th November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Mandatory wearing of face masks

In line with government guidance issued yesterday, all students must now wear face masks in communal spaces, outside of classrooms, where social distancing cannot be maintained. This will come into effect immediately.

The government has stated that although there is a very low risk of children becoming ill from COVID-19, this is a necessary measure to help reduce the spread of the virus.

We hope you share our understanding of the importance of wearing face masks to help protect the wider community, while still allowing children to go to school, which we all know is so important to their wellbeing and future life choices.

Below is some guidance of our expectations around face coverings:

Why are face masks so important?

Face masks are seen as a preventive measure. That is, there is some evidence they protect the wearer, but they have a greater impact as a barrier to spreading the virus. There have been many instances of people testing positive for the virus, but are not showing symptoms. In these cases, wearing a mask minimises the possibility of transmission. For this reason, face masks could go a long way to protecting our students, staff and their families.

What type of face masks should your child wear?

We appreciate many different types of masks are available to buy, so we want to make sure you get one that is right for your child.

The best type of masks are the disposable kind and have over 95% bacterial filtration efficiency (BFE). These can be purchased online or in any pharmacist.

However, we understand this can be quite costly, so many parents may opt for reusable masks. These masks should cover the mouth and nose and hook around the ears, or the ends tied around the head.

All face masks should be of a single, plain colour, with no patterns. Your child should also bring a small, sealable plastic bag (a freezer bag is perfect) to store their face mask when it is not required.



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What if my child is exempt from wearing a mask?

We understand some people are exempt from wearing masks on medical grounds. If this is the case for your child, please send a doctors note or other written medical evidence to your child's Head of Year.

What if my child forgets their mask?

Whenever we introduce new expectations, we ensure students have a full understanding of why it is happening, what they need to do and how to do it.

All students have been shown how to wear masks appropriately and why they are so important. As such, we see face masks as part of the school uniform, so **any student not wearing a face mask in the designated areas or failing to bring a face mask to school will receive a 30 minute after school detention, as they would for any other uniform infringement. Students will not be permitted to enter the school site without an appropriate face mask.**

What is the expectation of staff and other visitors?

For some time, we have asked all staff to wear face coverings inside school buildings and other communal areas. Teachers are not permitted to wear face coverings while they are teaching as this prevents them from communicating effectively.

Since September, all visitors have been required to wear face masks, sanitise and check-in when entering the school site.

If there are any suspected cases of COVID-19 in the school, or anyone displays symptoms associated with the virus, our first aid qualified staff have been trained in the use of full PPE (personal protective equipment).

What other measures have been put in place to keep everyone safe?

We are continually reviewing everything that has been put in place and taking feedback from staff, students and parents as to how we can make things safer.

Just before half term, we were inspected by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) with a sole focus on our COVID-19 safety precautions. The inspector looked at students in lessons, how people moved around the academy, our communications and various other elements of our safety measures.

The inspection went very well, with the inspector commending the academy on what has been put in place, and commenting our measures went 'over and above' the government guidance.

Should you have any further questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact your child's Head of Year.

Yours faithfully,



Mr A Otulakowski
Vice Principal