



FAO: Parents & Carers of Students at Denton Community College

RE: Clarification regarding the wearing of face masks in educational settings

Dear Parents & Carers

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and well at this time.

As part of the easing of Covid-19 restrictions on **Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021**, the Government announced that students and staff were no longer required to wear face masks in the classroom or in communal areas around school. Whilst we welcomed the removal of face masks, we also understood that some of our students and staff could be anxious as a result of the changes. Our response was therefore to allow students or members of staff to continue to wear a face mask if they wished do so. At the time, I mentioned that the reintroduction of face masks for students may be advised at a future date for a temporary period in response to particular localised outbreaks, including variants of concern. This immediate outbreak response remained for local Directors of Public Health to advise on when appropriate.

As you will be aware, Covid-19 infection rates in Tameside continue to remain high compared to other areas of the country. In response to this Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy (Director of Population Health) has written to local Headteachers recommending 'the continued use of face coverings for all pupils and staff in school until the end of the school term'. A copy of the letter has been shared with you alongside this letter. Following the advice given we have decided to implement the following three phase response:

- **Phase 1** - Strongly recommend students & staff wear face coverings both in the classroom and communal areas of the building
- **Phase 2** - Expect students & staff to wear face coverings in communal areas but strongly recommend they wear them in the classroom
- **Phase 3** – Expect students & staff to wear face coverings in all areas (Classrooms & Communal) of the school building

The national, local and in school infection rates will continue to be monitored and we will remain in regular contact with Public Health Tameside regarding our risk assessments to keep students & staff as safe as possible. As you are aware the wearing of masks is not mandatory in schools, however when we state 'Expect' as part of our response we do expect face masks to be worn by individuals unless there is a legitimate medical reason for not doing which the school has been informed of by parents & carers.

Moving forward our current response is **Phase 1**.

In addition to our protective measures in place to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in school, we continue to strongly encourage the twice-weekly use of 'Lateral Flow Tests' by students. These are effective at picking up people who have Covid but are not displaying any symptoms. If you would like school to provide these for your child please contact Mr Nixon (Assistant Headteacher) at [s.nixon@dentoncommunitycollege.org.uk](mailto:s.nixon@dentoncommunitycollege.org.uk).

**HEADTEACHER:** Mr G Rule

Please remember that if you or your child has any of the Covid-19 symptoms you should not send them into school; book a PCR test through the NHS; then you and your household must self-isolate whilst you wait for the results.

As before the Covid symptoms are still:

- a new, persistent cough
- a temperature
- a change in sense of smell or taste

These remain difficult times and we thank you for your ongoing support not only in the education of the young people of Denton but also the safety and wellbeing of all our stakeholders.

Yours sincerely



Greg Rule  
Headteacher