



11 May 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

Throughout the pandemic we have worked exceptionally hard to ensure we provide a high standard of education, whilst keeping the campus as safe as possible. Over the last year we have followed the DfE guidance and ensured that we have done our very best to implement the methods of control to mitigate the spread of COVID 19. At times this has been a real challenge and consumed a lot of our operational capacity, but working together as a community it would appear we are finally coming out of the woods.

Last night the Prime Minister highlighted his intention to further ease restrictions on Monday 17th May which I'm sure we all welcome and it is reassuring that yesterday no deaths were recorded for the first time from COVID-19. Within this announcement he briefly touched on how the guidance will now change for schools and how activities like residential visits etc will now be possible. However, the key headline was in regard to the wearing of face coverings in schools and how these will no longer be recommended for students, which brings me to the point of this correspondence.

The full DfE guidance can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/984843/10_May_Schools_Guidance.pdf

As with the guidance throughout the pandemic it isn't as clear cut as the headlines would have us believe. So I would like to clarify our position on the wearing of face coverings for the term ahead.

As a campus the following points reflect where we are currently:

- Since Easter we have had cases in Yr 10, Yr 11, Yr 13 and a member of staff
- Since Easter we have had to identify and isolate over 100 students across these year groups
- We know from experience when you have some cases, more are likely
- Only a proportion of our staff have received their 1st vaccination and a significant number have yet to receive any vaccination - this will be true for the wider community too
- We still have clinically vulnerable students and staff who have been requested back in school as shielding ceased with the last easing
- For Yr 11 and Yr 13 we are in the midst of a critical assessment window, due to the cancellation of public examinations - some students have already been impacted by recent infections and isolations. I want to do all we can to protect these students.

As always we have to balance what is right for the community, right for our students, our staff and ultimately what will allow us to remain open and ensure no further disruptions to your child's education, especially those completing assessments.

Given the points above and the proven impact on wearing face coverings, we will not at this point in time be changing our approach to the wearing of face coverings on campus. I think it is important to note we requested face coverings be used long before the DfE guidance, in light of what the World Health Organisation evidence had reported. Our approach has always been cautious and guided by local context, to ensure the safety of our community. This position has not changed and we want to ensure we operate as safely as possible and face coverings provide this simple, yet effective layer of protection.

We will review this position but for now we will be requesting that face coverings remain to be worn as follows:

- On school buses
- In all communal spaces
- In classrooms
- When moving through the school internally

In this regard there is no change to our current position and falls within the scope of the latest guidance from the DfE, taking into account our local context.

I hope you both understand the rationale behind this approach and will also support it in the weeks ahead. Our actions are driven by the desire to ensure there is no further disruption to your child's education, that the community is kept safe and students sitting assessments are not disadvantaged any further.

Yours sincerely



Will Teece
Headteacher