



**St Mary's Catholic School**  
**Policy for Face Masks**  
**September 2020**

As you may be aware, on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020 the government issued new guidance to schools in England which made the wearing of face masks mandatory in secondary schools in areas of the country which have high rates of transmission. In addition, schools in other areas of the country, such as St Mary's currently, were given the flexibility to introduce face masks, in those parts of the school where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain e.g. in communal areas such as corridors.

This policy of wearing face masks in communal areas is already mandatory in all secondary schools in Scotland and Northern Ireland and, whilst it is not currently mandatory in all schools in England, many schools, both locally and nationally, are choosing to implement this.

**Having carefully considered the latest guidance and the layout of our school building, we have decided that face masks will be worn by students and staff in communal indoor spaces such as corridors.** We feel this is a sensible approach at this time, to ensure an extra layer of protection for students and staff, given the guidance permits this, and to provide potentially increased confidence for students, parents and staff for the full reopening of the school.

The government is very clear that face masks should not be worn in classrooms, as other measures are already in place in classrooms to support health and safety, as outlined in Miss Patterson, Headteacher's letter of the 1<sup>st</sup> September. The government guidance also explains that wearing face masks in a classroom would have a negative impact on teaching and learning. **Therefore, whilst students and staff will wear face masks in corridors and other indoor communal areas, they will not wear face masks in classrooms.**

We are very lucky to have a building design that supports us in keeping year group bubbles separate in different wings of the school, however, as with most schools, it will be very challenging to maintain social distancing in our corridors, as students and staff are moving to and from, and within, these bubbles/zones. Therefore, the wearing of face masks in communal areas, where social distancing may not be possible, will help us to further reduce the possibility of the transmission.

Students will not have to wear face masks outside in the yards but they will have to wear a face mask when they enter the building and when walking to and from their zone. They will also wear face masks at lesson changeovers when moving between classrooms within their zone, as well as when walking to other areas of the school, for example, to the main hall.

As soon as students are seated in a classroom and/or a hall or have reached their outdoor break or lunchtime yard, students will be able to remove their face mask. Students will also not wear face masks in the dining hall. Therefore, overall, students will only be wearing these face masks for a few minutes at a time.

Staff will also wear face masks when in indoor communal areas with students, such as in school corridors.

**Students and staff will need to bring their own face mask to school.** We hope this should be fine, given everyone will likely already have a face mask due to wearing these in shops, on public transport etc. **Face masks used by students in school should be plain in design, with no patterns or logos** and they should be a face mask, rather than another type of face covering such as a scarf. Students should also bring a small plastic bag with them, to keep the mask safely stored, in their blazer pocket or bag, when it is not being worn. Students will be given guidance regarding how to wear/take off a face mask safely.

Of course, as with society more generally, a small number of staff and students may not be able to wear a face mask for medical reasons. If you feel that your child is in this medical exemption category, please contact Miss Largue (Years 7-11) or Mr McKeating (Years 12-13) in school.

*As with all school policies, we will review the policy of wearing face masks in communal indoor areas regularly and, if government or public health guidance changes and/or the national or local situation changes, we will adapt accordingly.*