

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021

Dear Head Teacher

**Re: Introduction of Face Coverings in Communal Areas**

In line with the national guidance ('Contingency Framework') the local authority and schools in Wigan are working together to plan for and respond to cases of COVID-19 amongst staff and students in a way that prioritises the quality of education and support to which students and staff are normally entitled.

[Guidance for schools: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19) explains the actions school leaders should take to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their school, and lists baseline control measures that should be in place in all settings:

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone.
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes.
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.
4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Alongside this, we have a range of wider COVID-19 support and measures available in the borough which also benefit schools, including:

- the provision of regional guidance for schools through Greater Manchester Directors of Public Health Group,
- a range of risk assessment and management templates to support schools and other educational settings,
- regular comms and support for schools and other educational settings in relation to interpreting the available guidance,
- daily tracking and monitoring of the levels of COVID-19 in individual schools in Wigan allowing timely and proportionate response,
- a robust approach to outbreak management, which includes formal risk assessment and recommendations for enhanced or exceptional infection control measures where appropriate.
- The local roll out of 12-15 year old vaccination programme in our local schools.

However, we acknowledge that COVID-19 prevalence is high at present, particularly amongst our 12-19 year old cohort, and therefore we have recently worked with colleagues across Greater Manchester to develop an Educational Settings COVID-19 Management Framework, which is intended to maximise the available flexibilities within the DfE guidance and support schools to rapidly implement appropriate measures in a range of different scenarios. If you have not received a copy of this Framework, please email [p.jamieson@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:p.jamieson@wigan.gov.uk) for a copy.

**In addition to this, we are also strongly recommending education settings across Wigan encourage the wearing of face coverings in communal areas for staff, visitors and students (year 7 and above), with effect from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021.**

This should help to ensure that children and young people can continue to receive education in as normal a way as possible. We have carefully considered this decision in particular, considering that this measure will; have minimal impact on education, will be effective in reducing risk of transmission, and will support accelerated vaccine roll out.

**Please note that any wearing of face coverings beyond this measure e.g. in classroom, will still require Director of Public Health sign off.**

We will continue to closely monitor and review the level of COVID-19 in our schools and will work with school partners to implement further measures as appropriate.

Yours sincerely,



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Director of Public Health



Cath Pealing  
Assistant Director of Education