



12 May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Updated Advice from the Department of Education

Following the advice from the Department of Education on the guidance for schools and face coverings. I can confirm that from Monday 17 May, face coverings will no longer be required in classrooms for staff and students. You can find the full guidance [here](#).

It is important to strike a balance between COVID-19 protection and student wellbeing and we welcome the guidance on face coverings for secondary school pupils. We are delighted that this will further improve interaction between teachers and students, ensuring the clearest possible communication to support learning.

Schools will still be required to minimise transmission and the revised May [DfE guidance](#) remains largely unchanged from September 2020. The requirement to maintain separate year group bubbles remains a central theme of the guidance; with a ***system of controls to prevent transmission between bubbles and minimise the number of students required to self-isolate with positive cases.***

Transmission of the virus in schools continues to decrease in line with wider community transmission, with the latest statistics showing a significant drop in the number of teachers and staff testing positive. However, we have experienced two positive cases in the past 7 weeks since re-opening.

The DfE guidance remains that local decisions must be made to mitigate transmission risk as much as possible, therefore in line with guidance:

- All students will be expected to wear a face covering in corridors and any communal areas where social distancing outside of the year group bubble is difficult when moving around the school site.

Face coverings **do not** need to be worn:

- By any students who is exempt.
- By students or teachers in the classroom or during lessons, but both are still free to do so if they wish. (Teachers will still be required to wear masks if they move out of their designated zone within the classroom).
- Whilst consuming food and drink at break and lunch times.
- Whilst students are mixing with students within their own year group bubble only.

This additional preventative measure will continue to allow students to move across our site between lessons and access their subject specialist teachers in their rooms, rather than remaining all day in the same classroom.

In order to mitigate risk and follow the DfE guidance on the re-opening of schools, we will also continue to have the following systems of control:

- A strictly enforced one-way system.
- Staff supervising lesson change over.
- Teacher presence to enforce corridor behaviour.
- No queuing in corridors - students will go straight into the classroom.
- Hand sanitiser on entry to classroom before and after removing masks.

All other protective measures such as ventilation and social distancing where possible will remain in place and regular rapid testing will continue to help find and isolate asymptomatic cases when they do occur.

Staff are not required to wear face coverings in the classroom (whilst in their designated zone) but should continue to wear them in communal areas such as the staff room, where social distancing may not be possible.

Other measures also remain unchanged:

- Teachers are required to teach from a 2-metre distance at the front of the classroom with students sat in rows, facing the front.
- Separate year group bubbles where students are registered, returning at break and lunch to their year group areas.
- Separate pastoral year team bases, our pastoral base the HUB will remain closed to students from different year groups.
- Staggered start and finish times
- Monitoring of children at break and lunch by Senior Leadership Team, duty staff, members of our pastoral team and at lunch by Meal Time Assistants

We are delighted that, as measures ease and the roadmap moves forward, with cautious optimism we can begin to enable students to take part in a wider range of activities and experiences. We will confirm further updates shortly.

Your patience and understanding in this unprecedented year with ongoing and short notice updates from the Department of Education is very much appreciated.

We want your son/daughter to have the very best educational experience possible, in an environment that will be as close to normal and as familiar as possible, but one in which the safety of us all is of the utmost importance.

Yours sincerely



Rob Pearsall
Headteacher

