



16th October,2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I last wrote to you in August regarding the wearing of face masks in Trust schools and our decision to make this optional for staff and students. I also said that we would review our policy in the light of any national or local changes. Unfortunately, as you will know, the country is now experiencing a significant rise in Covid-19 infection rates and London has entered a Tier 2 lockdown.

We recognise that the issue of masks can be highly emotive and contentious and we have had lots of communications from students, parents and staff on this matter. However, given the rising infection rates, we have now decided that from Monday 2 November we will require all students and staff to wear a Covid-safe mask in all school internal public spaces (not classrooms).

How will we manage the wearing of masks?

1. The wearing of masks will be mandatory for students in all internal public/communal areas. For example, travelling from one lesson to another or waiting in the lunch queue, working in sixth form study bases.
2. Student face masks will not be required in lessons, in line with government advice. "It will not be necessary to wear masks in the classroom, where protective measures already mean the risks are lower, and where they can inhibit learning".
3. Students will be permitted to remove their covering when they are in outside spaces, particularly at break and lunchtime.
4. Students may also remove their mask to eat or drink although the mask should not be removed for an extended period of time.
5. Staff have discretion to wear a visor or face mask and might also choose to wear a face covering in the classroom.
6. Where possible, we will be holding a small stock of masks in school for students who forget to bring one.
7. If there is a specific reason why your child is unable to wear a mask as per the guidelines above, please contact their respective Head of Year and we will provide them with a means to indicate to staff that they have permission not to wear a mask.

What rules will students need to follow when wearing a mask?

1. Students should avoid wearing single-use, 'surgical style', disposable blue facemasks as these need to be treated as hazardous waste and are not intended for continuous use.
2. Students are expected to wear a clean mask each day and change their mask during the day, especially if the mask is also worn for travel to and from school.
3. Once removed a mask should be stored in as hygienic a way as possible – government advice is that students all use a 'sealable plastic bag' – for example a 'zip-lock' style sandwich bag.

4. Face masks must be plain or a simple pattern but must not be decorated, designed, or multi-coloured. No logos, slogans or text. Masks should not be of a threatening or aggressive nature in their pattern.
5. In particular we do not allow 'ski style' masks, or 'snood' type style face coverings which are 'pulled up' from the neck.

When can a child not wear a mask?

1. Students cannot put on, wear or remove a mask because of medical, physical health, mental health reasons, or for impairment, or disability.
2. Putting on, wearing or removing a mask will cause severe distress
3. A student is speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate.
4. It avoids harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury – including when a mask would negatively impact on ability to exercise or participate in a strenuous activity (for example - in a PE lesson).

I would very much appreciate your support in this matter and, again, should the situation change, we will review the policy.

Kind regards,

Jennifer Smith
CEO