

**Dear Parent/Carers,**

You will have seen recently in the national news information about face coverings in school. The Department for Education's website states that 'face coverings should be worn in all secondary schools, especially when moving around the school, such as in corridors and in communal areas'

As a leadership team and school community, we need to support this approach and have decided that **we will expect all members of the school community to wear face coverings in communal areas (excluding classrooms) from the start of the academic year.** Pupils and staff with health reasons for not being able to wear a face covering are obviously exempt in the same way they are for shops.

The reasons for this approach is as follows:

- **The wearing of face coverings has become much more commonplace and accepted in society in the last month.**
- **It is a visible constant reminder that we need to take care, and that we are looking after each other, as masks protect those around us more than they protect ourselves.**
- **It will help more anxious children and staff feel safer as they return to school.**
- **There is a sense of "all in it together" as a community rather than some pupils or staff feeling self-conscious if they are in the minority (either way!) if we made it optional.**
- **In the event that there is an increase in cases in the region, and it becomes mandatory anyway for this locality, we will already be in good habits as a school community and have protected ourselves as much as possible.**

It will be expected that both pupils and staff wear a face covering in communal areas. They will not be worn while eating food or drinking in the break room areas. When worn, they must be worn correctly, covering the nose and mouth fully. Guidance on how they should be worn can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#how-to-wear-a-face-covering>

They are not to be worn in classrooms and pupils will need to remove face coverings **before** entering the classroom and stored in a sealable bag and then use the hand sanitiser at the door. Staff will also follow this procedure to model correct usage. Scarves or large pieces of cloth cannot be stored in sealable bags between use and so are not suitable as face coverings.

**It is unfeasible for the school to provide face coverings or sealable bags for staff and pupils and in the interest of health and safety, parents and carers will need to provide these for their children.**

Public Health England has provided guidance on how to make a face covering can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>. We would recommend that face coverings used are reusable ones which can be washed, both for financial and environmental reasons rather than use disposable masks. We would ask that any disposable face coverings are taken home to dispose of rather than thrown in bins around the school to reduce the risk of a build-up of soiled masks around the school site.

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I hope you can see that, on balance, this seems the right way to go, and I thank you for your support in advance with helping every member of our community feel safe.

