

Thursday 3rd September 2020

Dear Families,

**Use of Face-coverings**

We hope that you have had a positive final week of the holidays. We have been looking forward to seeing the children again today and hope that they are largely keen to return too.

You may be aware that the government updated its guidance for schools on Friday. We therefore wanted to let you know that we are in the process of revising the response to this guidance, along with certain elements to the risk assessment, published on the website the week before. The majority of any alterations will relate to our practices within school, but the area that we thought it worth outlining more specifically by letter is the use of face coverings, as the use of these crosses between home and school lives and has been much discussed in the media.

In line with the original guidance, we will be asking members of staff to wear disposable masks for supporting the children in carrying out personal care routines and certain food-giving routines, as well as in particular scenarios in which we know the transfer of bodily fluids is more likely. In addition to this, we will require members of staff to wear a face covering, unless exempt from doing so, when crossing into parts of the school where others who are not in their 'bubble' are working or when temporarily liaising with members of staff who are not in their 'bubble', such as essential meetings or conversations in relation to the students or school practices. These conversations will also be 'socially distanced', as you would expect.

In addition to this, members of staff will be welcome to wear a face covering if they themselves feel vulnerable or a particular scenario may be perceived to be at a higher risk for possible transmission of infection. At these times, they will be asked to consider the impact of face cover wearing on the delivery of education, general communication or the support of complex behaviour and wellbeing of the students, and where necessary put in place alternative protective measures such as sitting side by side or increasing the distance between themselves and the pupils as an alternative to wearing a face covering.

There may be some students who feel they would wish to wear a face covering for parts of their day. If hygiene can be maintained when doing so, then they are also welcome to elect to wear a face covering, but there is no expectation that the students do so and we are very mindful that some will not be able to independently put on or remove face coverings, or will not tolerate their use, or use them appropriately.

We are aware that the use of face coverings within schools is likely to be an ongoing area for discussion and we may choose to update our position, either in line with any alterations in the guidance or as a result of reflections on practices, discussions and observations within the school community.

We hope this position is one that balances the social, communication and educational needs of the students with considerations of public and personal health and hygiene. As ever, if you would like to discuss this or any other elements of our practices, please to get in touch.

Kind regards,



Heidi Dennison and Simon Knight  
**Joint Headteachers**