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4th March 2021

Dear families,

We have been considering the updated government guidance on face coverings in school and following discussion with other local authority special schools we are recommending that (taken from the World Health Organisation statement from the 21st of August 2020)...

“children aged 12 and over should wear a face covering under the same conditions as adults, in particular when they cannot guarantee at least a 1-metre distance from others and there is widespread transmission in the area.”

The DfE guidance continues *“Where pupils and students in year 7 and above are educated, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff, pupils and students when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.*

Face coverings do not need to be worn by pupils and students when outdoors on the premises. In addition, we now also recommend that in those settings where pupils and students in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn in classrooms and during activities unless social distancing can be maintained. This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons.

*In primary schools, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and adult visitors in situations where social distancing between adults is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas). **Children in primary school do not need to wear a face covering.***

We are recommending these additional precautionary measures for a limited time during this period of high coronavirus (COVID-19) prevalence in the community. These measures will be in place until Easter.

As with all measures, we will keep this under review and update guidance at that point...Face visors or shields should not be worn as an alternative to face coverings. They may protect against droplet spread in specific circumstances but are unlikely to be effective in preventing aerosol transmission when used without an additional face covering. They should only be used after carrying out a risk assessment for the specific situation and should always be cleaned appropriately.



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Those who rely on visual signals for communication, or communicate with or provide support to such individuals, are currently exempt from any requirement to wear face coverings in education settings or in public places."

This is not mandatory, and the school is taking a sensible approach to these guidelines. We will be telling staff that they 'should' wear face masks in classes of secondary age pupils where social distancing cannot be maintained. Similarly, pupils of that age 'should' wear masks in classes where social distancing cannot be maintained. **We will be encouraging this, but not requiring this.** We will not be penalising staff or pupils who cannot, or choose not to wear a face mask. We will be providing surgical (disposable) masks for staff and pupils to use if they wish, or they may choose to wear their own reusable masks.

Adults must wear face masks when in communal areas around the school already, and this will continue.

Many thanks, as ever, for your continued support and understanding.

Kate Davies
Headteacher



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