

Dear Parent / Carer,

**Re: wearing a face covering at school – updated advice and guidance**

We hope you and your family have enjoyed the summer so far, despite the additional challenges we all face at this moment. As the Government and other agencies are increasingly advising the wearing of suitable face coverings in identified public areas at this time, we felt it appropriate to share our latest recommendations prior to welcoming pupils back in September.

**Can my child wear an appropriate face mask / covering at school?**

**YES, in all areas of the school, including classrooms** – The Academy supports those who wish to wear suitable face coverings. Our school supports pupils wearing of appropriate face coverings / masks where it is safe and practicable to do so, particularly indoors. At the moment, this is a personal choice for you to make with your child. The school supports the wearing of fabric masks as detailed on GOV.UK. Anyone (whether child, young person or adult) wishing to wear a face covering in school should be enabled to do so, as long as it is appropriate for the young person concerned. The wearing of a suitable fabric face covering, particularly for those aged 11 years and above, will be mandatory in any local lockdown situations in school communal areas. Please note that WHO recommends that children aged 5 and under should not wear masks and that that face masks with valves are not currently recommended in community settings.

**My child is young and struggles with wearing a face covering, but I want them to wear one, what should I do?**

Face coverings used incorrectly can accelerate transmission risks. As a parent it is important that you are confident that your child understands how to wear, put on and remove a face covering safely. If your child has any underlying medical conditions, you should discuss the wearing of masks / face coverings with your GP or specialist. Should pupils not adopt safe protocols, the Academy reserves the right to contact home and / or direct pupils to safely dispose of their mask. Please note, Public Health England do not currently recommend face coverings for children under the age of 3 for health and safety reasons, furthermore, the World Health Organisation does not currently recommend face coverings for children aged 5 and younger.

**What type of face covering should I provide my child with?**

Remember, face coverings are reported to be more appropriate for older children / young adults. Should they / you wish them to wear a fabric covering please refer to government guidance:

[Guidance for manufacturers and makers of face coverings to comply with the General Product Safety Regulations 2005](#)

[Face coverings: when to wear one and how to make your own](#)

Please note that face masks with valves are not currently recommended in community settings.

### **Can my child wear any colours, logos etc. on their face covering?**

Schools within the Academy ask that students who choose to wear coverings only wear plain grey, black, white or pale blue fabric coverings. It is important that masks are for health and safety reasons and do not promote other issues, concerns, views etc. We have asked staff to adhere to this too. The exception to this will be staff who wear curriculum-related and / or child-friendly designs. If a student attends school with a face covering that does not conform to this, they will be directed to safely dispose of this immediately.

### **Will school provide my child with a face covering?**

No, the Academy will keep PPE available for staff caring for children and pupils with medical and complex needs. The choice to wear and buy a suitable covering for your child is your responsibility.

### **How should a face covering be worn and removed safely?**

Government guidance is as follows, please check regularly for updates at [Face coverings: when to wear one and how to make your own](#)

How to wear a face covering

A face covering should:

- Cover your nose and mouth while allowing you to breathe comfortably
- Fit comfortably but securely against the side of the face
- Be secured to the head with ties or ear loops
- Be made of a material that you find to be comfortable and breathable, such as cotton
- Ideally include at least two layers of fabric (the World Health Organisation recommends three depending on the fabric used)
- Unless disposable, it should be able to be washed with other items of laundry according to fabric washing instructions and dried without causing the face covering to be damaged

When wearing a face covering you should:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on
- Avoid wearing on your neck or forehead
- Avoid touching the part of the face covering in contact with your mouth and nose, as it could be contaminated with the virus
- Change the face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
- Avoid taking it off and putting it back on a lot in quick succession (for example, when leaving and entering shops on a high street)

When removing a face covering:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before removing
- Only handle the straps, ties or clips
- Do not give it to someone else to use

- If single use, dispose of it carefully in a residual waste bin and do not recycle
- If reusable, wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions at the highest temperature appropriate for the fabric
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser once removed.

**What should my child do if they want to remove their 'Single Use' mask in school?**

Ensure that your child has a safe disposable bag to place the mask in and tie, before placing in an allocated lidded bin. These bins are located at the first aid area.

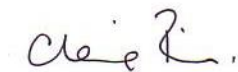
**I do not want my child to wear a mask.**

The wearing of appropriate face coverings is currently a choice for you and pupils to make except where Government lockdown situations and guidelines determine otherwise. All staff and pupils respect the likelihood that some pupils and staff do not wish to wear a face covering whilst infection rates are low and/or cannot wear face coverings due to their specific needs.

Should you require any further guidance, please refer to GOV.UK online and do not hesitate to contact the Academy by phone or email. Please do not attend the school office/reception in person at this time.

Wishing you and your family a safe autumn/summer and we look forward to welcoming our pupils back.

Kindest wishes,



Claire Price

Principal