



5 March 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

### Face coverings in school

Following my [letter to you on Tuesday 2 March](#) and the letter from Mary Davies, CEO of Maiden Erlegh Trust, earlier today, I am writing to further clarify our position on the wearing of face masks by students in school when they return from Monday 8 March.

I am writing as there has been a great deal of discussion and debate in the media about this issue and, frankly, some very unclear messaging and leadership on this issue from the Department for Education.

Our position is that we want to implement safety control guidance as fully as possible in order to do everything we possibly can to keep our staff and students safe in our school and to build confidence for those coming into our building every day.

The updated guidance to schools about reopening from 8 March says:

*“Where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils 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 when outdoors on the premises. In addition, we now also recommend in those schools, that face coverings should be worn in classrooms or 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”* [DFE Guidance](#)

The scientific guidance suggests that the main reduction in risk resulting from wearing face covering is other people rather than the wearer. It is therefore important that we understand that wearing a face covering is an act of altruism and neighbourly care and this is what we will be emphasising with students when we discuss face coverings. A wider rationale can be found [here](#).

**We will therefore be expecting all students to be wearing face coverings in and around school, including during lessons, unless their parents have explicitly informed the school otherwise** (this includes parents informing us if their child has a medical exemption). If parents do not wish their child to wear a face covering then they must inform their child's Head of Year via the school office. Students in this category will be given a red lanyard to wear and keep, which will indicate that they are not to be challenged about the fact that they are not wearing a face covering. Students must take responsibility for their red lanyard by ensuring it is worn at all times, if a student loses their red lanyard, there will be a charge of £1. We will assume that all other students are to wear their face covering and staff will ask students to comply with this.

Students will not wear face coverings:

- When outside during break time (it is important that students take off their face coverings when outside for fresh air);
- During PE lessons;

- When seated at the table to eat their lunch (they will need to wear their covering when queueing to collect their food from the canteen);
- Where social distancing can be maintained (this will be very rare in our building).

Otherwise, the wearing of a face covering will be expected. If students are not wearing a face covering, or not wearing it appropriately when they should, they will be given a reminder and asked to comply. Any further non-compliance will be subject to the school behaviour policy as this will be considered as defiance of school rules. In the rare event where a consequential sanction is necessary it will be proportionate and, in keeping with guidance, would not result in any student being denied their education.

Finally, on a different matter, please could I encourage all parents to complete our annual parent survey. The link is [here](#) and the letter giving more detail is [here](#).

Thank you for your support as we look forward, excitedly, to the return of students next week and I wish you a good weekend.

Yours sincerely



**Mr A Johnson**  
Headteacher