



17 September 2020

Dear parent/carer,

Face coverings

Overall we have had a good start to the school year, in very difficult circumstances and while we have made clear to a very small number of students that they need to raise their standards, particularly outside of school in the community, the overwhelming majority of students have been fantastic. While the new layout and procedures have taken some getting used to, broadly we feel they are working well and getting the right balance of providing a full education, while keeping everyone safe.

However, given the emerging national picture and observing staff and students in school, we have taken the decision to change our expectations on face coverings for students. From Monday, **all students must wear a face covering or visor when they are in school**. The only exceptions to this are when they are engaging in lessons and securely within their own bubble (where it remains optional), and while eating and drinking. If your child is exempt from wearing a face covering, please ensure you discuss this with their pastoral team so they can be provided with a blue exemption cards to prevent any awkward conversations.

Please ensure that your child has a face covering with them on Monday, we will support any families who are not able to provide one.

It has been difficult to make this decision because there are clearly some parents / carers in our community who will strongly support this and some who will equally strongly disagree. On balance I feel that this is the safest way to protect staff and students so hope that you will support us, even if you don't feel it is a necessary step.

Aside from protecting against COVID19 directly, it is clear from some other schools' experiences that in the event of a positive case in the school community, the steps taken by the school (ie wearing face coverings) may reduce how many other staff or students have to isolate. Given that the failing testing system is already resulting in staff and students with a cough being out of school as they struggle to get a test, anything we can do to improve the chances of keeping the school open for as many students as possible, seems worthwhile.

I hope you will support us with this and see that it is a step we are taking in order to best protect our school community.

Kind regards,

Shaun Simmons
Principal