



Friday, 28 August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Updated advice on face coverings and preparing your child for the return to school

This week, the Government provided further information regarding the use of face coverings in schools. The [DfE guidance](#) (published 26 August 2020) outlines the following:

- For schools and colleges in most circumstances (i.e. not subject to local restrictions/lockdowns) the government is still not recommending face coverings as necessary in education settings.
- Schools and colleges, however, have the discretion to require face coverings for pupils and staff in communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed, if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances.
- The use of face coverings in the classroom should still be avoided because they “can have a negative impact on learning and teaching”.

As widely reported, this new information is based on the World Health Organisation guidance (published 21 August) that “children aged 12 and over should wear a mask 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”.

You will have read in the guidance that I sent to you last week that we already consider this to be a sensible measure to take in respect of certain areas of the school, for example the Art Graphics/Photography rooms T8 and T9. Next week, as part of their induction, students will receive clear information about how to wear masks when they are moving around the school and in areas where social distancing cannot be maintained. In the event that you believe that your son or daughter should be exempt from wearing a mask, please contact Mr Sturla, our Pastoral lead, on jsturla001@waddesdonschool.com.

Less widely reported this week were the concerns raised by the World Health Organisation regarding compliance by young people regarding appropriate mask wearing and proper hygiene routines relating to face coverings. With this in mind, we will provide students with information in their induction to the new term, but we also ask that you support at home by:

- Ensuring your son/daughter has a **washable face mask** for use in school, together with an appropriate storage system, such as a clear sealable plastic bag;
- Reinforcing the fact that they should only touch the ear loops, and no other part of the mask when attaching or removing it.

Please also reinforce the message that handwashing and basic hygiene, combined with adhering to the year group 'bubbles', are deemed more important in the hierarchy of controls. The WHO advice refers to face coverings as "one part of a comprehensive strategy".

I recognise that the return to school continues to raise questions for some families and may well be a cause of anxiety for many young people. On their return, we will take time to provide our students with the reassurances they need, teach them the new routines and also answer any questions they may have.

You may find it reassuring to read the information from the [Chief Medical Officers from all four nations in the United Kingdom](#) who have made it clear that the overall risks to children from coronavirus (COVID-19) in relation to education settings is low and that the risks associated with not being in school certainly outweigh those of being in school. There is also [government information for parents](#) which may answer any questions you have.

In the meantime, I would like to wish you and your family an enjoyable Bank Holiday weekend. Should you have any questions or concerns, staff will be fully able to access their emails from Tuesday, 1st September.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Abbott
Headteacher, Waddesdon CE School