



02/09/20

Dear Parent/Carer

We are very much looking forward to welcoming students back to school next week. I wrote to you last week to say we would be in touch regarding the new rules around face coverings.

We feel confident that we have got very good control measures in place and that incidents of Covid-19 have been decreasing in Bedford. However, we are also aware that many students and staff, while excited to be coming back to school, may also be anxious about returning.

**The senior leadership team have taken the decision that we will ask students and staff to wear face masks when inside the building – in corridors and communal areas such as Piccadilly. We envisage the wearing of face masks in the building to be a short term measure and we will review this within the first three weeks.**

It is a measure to instil extra confidence for us all and reflects the wearing of masks in the wider community. There will be some exceptions (for instance, if a student has a disability or a specific need) and if you feel your child should be exempt for medical reasons, please contact your Head of House or use the Mark Rutherford School email address.

Masks will not be worn in classrooms as the guidance clearly states, and we believe, that they would have a negative impact on teaching and learning. We will work with students over the induction days to explain how to put on and remove their masks safely and then store them in bag.

We ask that you support us with this and ensure that:

1. All students have a plain face mask each day. This should be a mask that covers the ears, not an adapted face covering such as a scarf.
2. They have a small bag, such as a plastic food bag, to keep their mask in when not wearing it.
3. They have their own hand sanitiser. Sanitiser dispensers are available throughout the school but it will speed up processes and support regular hand washing if students have their own.
4. They have a packet of tissues to support the 'Catch it, Kill it, Bin it' routines.

We realise things are very different to how they used to be and will support students in the early days to develop good routines. As confidence builds within the school community we will review mask wearing and hope that this extra precaution will soon be unnecessary.

## 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:*

- ✓ first wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser
- ✓ 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 for the fabric
- ✓ wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser once removed

## Can pupils, staff and visitors wear face shields or visors instead of face coverings?

No. Face shields or visors should only be worn in addition to face coverings. They are not a suitable replacement. This guidance is based on there being no evidence that face shields/ visors are effective in preventing transmission from the wearer to others. They do provide some protection for the wearer against large droplet exposure but are unlikely to provide any protection for the wearer against small aerosols.

Further information about the return of students can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Yours sincerely



Mrs Julie Bloor  
Headteacher  
Mark Rutherford School