

11 May 2021

Dear all

You may have picked up already, that face masks will no longer be required by students in school, with effect from Monday 17 May, as part of further measures to ease lockdown.

The key to this change is cited by the DfE as:

From 17 May, in line with Step 3 of the roadmap, face coverings will no longer be recommended for pupils and students in classrooms or communal areas, in all schools and FE providers. Face coverings will also no longer be recommended for staff in classrooms. In all schools and FE providers, we continue to recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and visitors in situations outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas)

In practical terms:

- For students, the wearing of face masks is therefore optional from Monday - I would expect the vast majority of students to not wear them, but those who feel anxious or have underlying health concerns can wear them as they prefer.
- Members of staff will continue to wear face masks in corridors and other communal areas but not in the classroom (unless they prefer to).
- Lateral Flow testing remains in place for the moment - twice weekly for students and staff (Mondays and Thursdays).
- We will continue with all our other Covid measures including one-way systems and the use of designated social and recreational areas. We will also continue with day-cleaning and encouraging students to wash their hands or use anti-viral hand sanitisers.

In general, this is good news and is linked to the steady reduction in Covid cases and the roll out of the vaccine programme. Our students have been excellent in complying with all the DfE Covid requirements but not having to wear face masks from Monday must come, to many, as a real plus.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

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