



27 August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: COVID-19 Update – Return to School in September

I hope you are keeping well and have enjoyed the summer.

Further to the newsletter sent on Monday 24 August, I am writing to update you on the slight change of government guidelines, which occurred on Tuesday 25 August regarding the use of face masks for students in school. See following statements from the DfE:

“the government is revising its guidance on face coverings for staff and children in Year 7 or above in England. Nationwide, while the government is not recommending face coverings are necessary, schools will have the discretion to require face coverings in communal areas if they believe that is right in their particular circumstances.” DfE 25.08.20

The guidelines from the DfE which are based on the WHO (World Health Organisation) guidance, still do not recommend face coverings unless in an ‘area of national government intervention’ or ‘widespread transmission (e.g. Leicester)’. An area like Essex is still in the same situation we were before the new guidance. However, there is a possibility for further changes:

“Consistent with WHO’s advice, if the rate of transmission increases across the whole country, it may be necessary to apply stricter guidance on face coverings in schools nationally. This is not necessary at the moment but the government will keep the evidence on transmission under constant review”. DfE 25.08.20

As a result of this slight change in guidance, students and staff can now choose to wear face masks if they wish to in communal areas such as common rooms and corridors. Post 16 will be putting an extra measure in regarding the specific use of the common room, which Mrs Howells will email you about later this week.

I would like to reassure you that as a school we have spent a lot of time preparing for our return, following all the health and safety guidelines and implementing the Covid-19 secure measures mentioned below:

- Year group bubbles
- Designated areas at break and lunch times
- Staggered break, lunch and school finish times
- Social distancing where possible when not in bubbles
- Hand sanitisers for regular use in all corridors and classrooms
- Extra cleaning rotas in place throughout the day
- Signage to continually remind staff and students to be COVID-19 alert
- One way systems in corridors
- Contactless payment and door security

Be The Best You Can Be

You can see that a number of measures have been carefully thought out and put into place to keep our school as normal and safe as possible. As we have all had to adapt to a new way of life outside of school it is important to remember that we need to apply the same thinking inside school. Therefore, it is all our responsibility to adhere to the Covid-19 prevention measures such as applying 'catch it bin it kill it' when sneezing/coughing, regular hand washing/sanitising and social distancing.

We will of course continue to monitor the situation closely and inform you of any changes to the daily running of the school.

I look forward to welcoming all students back to school next week. Obviously, there will be new procedures in place that will feel different for a while and our behaviours will need to change due to Covid-19. We will continue to expect the highest of standards from everyone at all times to ensure our students receive an outstanding educational experience.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Smyrk', written over a faint, dotted grid background.

Ian Smyrk
Headteacher