

May 2021

Dear Parent / Guardian

**Re: COVID-19 Update - Face Coverings**

I hope this letter finds you safe and well.

I write in reference to the Prime Minister's announcement on Monday evening on the use of face coverings by students and staff in schools. I have received the following guidance from the Department for Education which provides the following detail:  
*"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.)"*

Staff and students at Regents Park have worn face coverings since the 1st of September 2020. We took this approach at a time when face coverings were not mandated in schools because we felt this would enhance our control measures. Along with other control measures including the good ventilation, the one way system, handwashing, social distancing where possible and twice weekly testing this has kept our COVID cases to a minimum within the school with only 21 student cases since the track and trace began over eight months ago. This is due to the commitment and understanding that our community has shown to protect each other.

Only today we have been dealing with a positive case within our school and this is a sobering reminder that COVID is still present in our community albeit in much lower numbers.

We are of course delighted that the national requirements for face coverings in schools has been removed from Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May, as this demonstrates the positive direction that we are moving in as a country towards beating the COVID pandemic. Although low, the rates of infection in Southampton are higher than the national average, and this, combined with the advice from SAGE to the government that testing and mask wearing should be maintained "in the coming months" means that all school leaders are making difficult decisions about what is right for their individual school or college and the communities they serve.

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Headteacher : Mrs Samantha Barnes





After careful reflection and in consultation with other Secondary Heads most schools and colleges in Southampton feel it is right to be cautious and keep face coverings for just a few more weeks up to May half term before reviewing the decision to remove them. Regents Park will therefore be requesting that students continue to wear masks for the last 10 days of this term from Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May until Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May.

I know you will understand that this along with the other difficult decisions we have had to make this year is for the benefit, safety, and welfare of our whole school community. We will of course review the situation again at the end of this half term in preparation for our return on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June.

We would appreciate your support with this safety measure and we hope that despite the challenges that this will bring you will encourage your child to continue to wear their mask.

Yours faithfully

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