



June 2021

Dear Parent / Guardian

Re: COVID-19 Update - Face Coverings

I hope this letter finds you safe and well.

Staff and students at Regents Park have worn face coverings since the 1st of September 2020 until end of May 2021. 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 good ventilation, one-way systems, handwashing, social distancing where possible and twice weekly testing, this has kept our COVID cases to a minimum. This is due to the commitment and understanding that our community has shown in order to protect each other.

Today, we have been advised that there has been a 300% increase in the number of cases in Southampton following the Delta variation, the evidence suggests is 60% more transferrable than the Alpha variant affecting young people aged between 11-19 years old. Below is an extract from the email we have received from the Local Authority.

Face coverings

We support Headteachers in their decision making on the continued use of face coverings by pupils, staff and visitors in secondary school and college settings. The evidence base continues to suggest that face masks and coverings in the community setting are most beneficial in the following situations:

In enclosed spaces where social distancing is not possible or compromised.

- *When not interacting with people that you normally interact with.*
- *When worn for short periods of time; once they become moist they become less effective and should be changed.*
- *When their use is accompanied by other public health measures, and including frequent hand hygiene and social distancing.*
- *Where the wearer is able to use them correctly (and hence where age disability etc. are important factors to take into account) to maximise effectiveness and limit any disadvantages to face mask/coverings such as safety and potential to cross contaminate.*

We thank you for your continued hard work in balancing the need to keep our children, young people and communities safe from COVID-19 and the need to ensure children and young people receive the opportunities they need during their education.

Best Wishes,

Debbie Chase

*Director of Public Health
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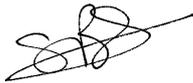
In light of the above and in line with other Secondary Heads in Southampton, we feel it is right to be cautious and advise parents that although they are not compulsory, we are asking for your support to encourage your child to wear face coverings in school until the end of term in order to avoid any isolation over the summer break. We will of course, have masks available on sale at reception.

Only this week 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.

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 would appreciate your support with this safety measure and we hope that you will encourage your child to wear a face mask.

Yours faithfully



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