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3 September 2020

Dear Parent or Carer

We are writing to you with some further information about welcoming students back next week, following the government's recent change in guidance on the use of face coverings in schools.

While continuing to maintain that face coverings are not required in classrooms, the government has said that there may be some benefit in wearing face coverings in communal areas of secondary schools, such as corridors during lesson changeover times. This, however, should be considered against the potential risks of students using face coverings incorrectly or repeatedly touching their faces.

The main points of the new guidance are as follows:

- Face coverings are not necessary in classrooms
- In areas where there are additional lockdown measures, secondary schools should require students and staff to wear face coverings in communal areas
- In all other areas, it is for schools to decide if face coverings should be worn in communal areas. Schools should consider issues such as the layout of their school site and what other measures are in place to reduce the risk of infection.

We have once again reviewed the extensive arrangements we have put in place and that we have shared with you recently. As you will be aware that we have made significant changes to our school days and our operations to reduce the number of times in the day students can come into contact with students in different year groups. Our new timetabling arrangements mean students in different year groups will not be able to mix at breaktimes and lunchtimes and there are only two brief occasions in the day when students will move between lessons, rather than seven occasions in our "normal" school day. We are also receiving a daily report on the numbers of positive Covid-19 tests in the region and have access to information that breaks this down at town and village level. Although there has been a small increase in cases over the summer, infection levels are very low in all the localities in which our schools are based.

Given all the measures we have in place we do not believe that requiring face coverings will add a significant additional level of safety and therefore we have decided that face coverings will not be required anywhere on our school sites when we re-open this month. However, as this is such a fluid situation, we will keep this decision under review and we may, at some future point, require face coverings to be worn. To be completely transparent with you we would like to share some of the circumstances in which this may change:

- If we become subject to additional local restrictions at any point, the government will expect us to require face coverings
- If the data we see each day starts to show a significant increase in infection levels locally we may require face coverings



The Education Alliance is a charitable limited company registered in England and Wales No. 7542211 whose registered office is at the above address.



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- If, when students return, we feel that lesson changeover times are presenting a higher level of risk than we anticipate then we may require face coverings.

Should the situation change we will, of course, inform you as soon as possible.

We recognise there is a wide range of views on the use of face coverings and it is inevitable that some people will agree, and some may disagree with our decisions. Please be assured though, that we are following all government guidance, using all information available to us and are continuing to prioritise the safety of students and staff.

We also recognise that some students and staff may feel more secure if they choose to wear a face covering in school. We are happy for anyone to make that choice and would ask that where they do, they wear a plain covering with no wording or logos on. Also, anyone who chooses to wear a face covering should bring a clear, sealable plastic bag in which to carry the face covering while not in use.

We look forward to welcoming students back very soon and will remain in regular contact with you over the coming weeks and months.

Yours faithfully

Jonny Uttley
CEO

Scott Ratheram
Executive Principal



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