



The John Warner School • Stanstead Road • Hoddesdon • Hertfordshire • EN11 0QF
Telephone: 01992 462889 • Facsimile: 01992 470679 • E-mail: admin@johnwarner.herts.sch.uk
Website: www.johnwarner.herts.sch.uk • Headteacher: Jeremy M. Scott

27th August 2020

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

Re. 'Be Ready' for school: Face masks

This fourth letter in a series of reminders about getting ready for the return of school in September is about the wearing of face masks.

It is important to stress that the school has already implemented significant measures to maintain social distancing, such as the organisation of year group 'bubbles' into separate teaching zones and break zones, staggered starts, finishes and lunches etc as well as the promotion of good personal hygiene, such as provision of hand sanitiser. The wearing of face masks has become a topical issue this week but it should not dominate our back to school plans.

Please see below for the main points which summarise our approach to the wearing of face masks as well as some more detailed explanation for each point.

Statement on face masks

On 25th August 2020, the government issued an [updated announcement](#) on the wearing of face masks/coverings for staff and children in Year 7 or above in schools in England. In light of this announcement, as well as the [World Health Organisation statement](#) on 21st August 2020, we have updated our recommendations for the use of face masks in school.

Stricter measures may need to be implemented if our area sees an increase in transmissions.

Main points

The following will be in effect from September 2020 and will be reviewed as appropriate:

1. Staff and pupils are expected to carry a face mask with them at all times;
2. Staff and pupils are recommended to wear a face mask when they are in internal communal areas such as corridors;
3. Staff and pupils should remove face masks in classrooms for lessons;
4. Staff and pupils can wear face masks in other areas of the school (such as external communal areas at break and lunch);
5. The wearing of face masks is not mandatory in any situation and should not deter other actions that control the spread of the virus more effectively;
6. Face masks should be an appropriate design, worn correctly and maintained and disposed of correctly.

Detailed explanations

1. Face masks have become a familiar part of our lives in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. They are mandatory (with some exemptions) in many indoor locations such as shops, banks, hair salons, places of worship and on public transport and recommended in other indoor locations where social distancing may be difficult and where you might have contact with people you wouldn't normally meet. The World Health Organisation recommend that children over the age of 12 should wear a mask under the same



conditions as adults, “in particular when they cannot guarantee at least a 1-metre distance from others and there is widespread transmission in the area.” While we have not made it mandatory for masks to be worn in school, many pupils will need masks if they travel to school on public transport or visit shops on their way to or from school.

2. School corridors can become busy, especially during lesson changeovers and evacuation procedures. While we will encourage pupils to enter classrooms as quickly as possible, there will be more congestion, albeit within year group bubbles, at this time and maintaining a social distance of 1+ metre will not always be possible. For this reason, we recommend face masks to be worn by staff and pupils when they are in transit. This is less important in outside spaces.
3. Classrooms already have protective measures that will limit the potential risks of transmission (restricted movement, tables facing the front etc) and there are concerns that the wearing of face masks could inhibit learning (importance of verbal and non-verbal communication). Therefore, pupils and staff should remove face masks in classrooms for lessons.
4. If staff or pupils feel more comfortable wearing face masks in other parts of the school, such as outside spaces, then they can but this will not be recommended or encouraged.
5. The wearing of face masks comes quite far down the hierarchy of effective controls and protection from the spread of Covid-19. Social distancing (including isolation of those displaying symptoms) and good personal hygiene (such as regular hand washing) are seen as the most effective forms of protection and prevention. According to the government “when used correctly, wearing a face covering may reduce the spread of coronavirus droplets in certain circumstances, helping to protect others.”
6. All staff and pupils should follow the following advice relating to face masks (more detail [here](#)):
 - a. Appropriate design - a face mask is something which safely covers the nose and mouth. You can buy reusable or single-use facemasks. You may also use a scarf, bandana, religious garment or hand-made cloth covering but these must securely fit round the side of the face.
 - b. How to wear a face mask:
 - i. A face covering should:
 1. cover your nose and mouth while allowing you to breathe comfortably
 2. fit comfortably but securely against the side of the face
 3. be secured to the head with ties or ear loops
 4. be made of a material that you find to be comfortable and breathable, such as cotton
 5. ideally include at least two layers of fabric (the World Health Organisation recommends three depending on the fabric used)
 6. unless disposable, it should be able to be washed with other items of laundry according to fabric washing instructions and dried without causing the face covering to be damaged
 - ii. When wearing a face covering you should:
 1. wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on
 2. avoid wearing on your neck or forehead



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3. avoid touching the part of the face covering in contact with your mouth and nose, as it could be contaminated with the virus
 4. change the face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
 5. avoid taking it off and putting it back on a lot in quick succession
- iii. When removing a face covering:
1. wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before removing
 2. only handle the straps, ties or clips
 3. do not give it to someone else to use
 4. if single-use, dispose of it carefully in a residual waste bin and do not recycle
 5. if reusable, wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions at the highest temperature appropriate for the fabric
 6. wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser once removed
- c. Maintaining and disposing face masks - Do not touch the front of the face covering, or the part of the face covering that has been in contact with your mouth and nose. Once removed, store reusable face coverings in a plastic bag until you have an opportunity to wash them. If the face covering is single use, dispose of it in a residual waste bin. Do not put them in a recycling bin. Make sure you clean any surfaces the face covering has touched using normal household cleaning products. Wash your face covering regularly and follow the washing instructions for the fabric. You can use your normal detergent. You can wash and dry it with other laundry. You must throw away your face covering if it is damaged.

Our view is that this is a reasonable and proportionate response to the changing guidance. We acknowledge that this issue, like many others relating to Covid 19, ignites different opinions. We think that this approach gives reassurances to those who find added comfort and security in wearing facemasks while not imposing them on everyone when the main precautions are about social distancing, personal hygiene and being aware of what to do if symptoms are identified – this will be the focus of tomorrow's update.

Best wishes.

Mr Jeremy Scott
Headteacher