



Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Yesterday at 4pm, all schools across Cheshire West and Chester received a letter from Ian Ashworth, Director of Public Health for the Local Authority. Within his letter, Mr Ashworth has asked all secondary schools to implement the use of face coverings for all students in communal areas from Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September – I have attached a copy of his letter for your information.

Previous guidance from our Local Authority has been that face coverings should remain optional and our current School Re-opening Guidance reflects this position. St Nicholas Catholic High School welcomes this new updated guidance from Cheshire West and Chester and we will look to implement this additional mitigation as recommended. Therefore I can confirm that **all students will be expected to wear a face covering in communal areas of school from 8.20am on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September.**

**Key Principles:**

- ✓ Consistent with our current process, all face coverings should be safely stored in individual, sealable plastic bags between use. They should not be placed directly into pockets
- ✓ All face coverings must comply with current Government guidance as outlined below
- ✓ All face coverings must be plain with no detail, decoration or logos.

Face coverings will need to be worn:

- Travelling to and from all lessons via corridors and outdoor spaces
- Travelling to lessons at the end of lunch and break times
- Inside the Sixth Form Common Room
- Inside the PE Changing Rooms
- During 'wet weather' arrangements in classrooms when not consuming food or drink
- Lining up to enter the Hall and Dining Room and purchasing food from the Dining Room
- On entering the school campus each morning from Greenbank Lane
- On exiting any vehicle on school campus



Students arriving at school using school transport should now continue to wear their face coverings until arriving at their form room.

Face coverings will not need to be worn during lessons or outside during break and lunch, though students may choose to do so.

### **What is a Face covering?**

Current Government guidance states that a face covering should:

- *be made of a material that you find to be comfortable and breathable, such as cotton*
- *ideally include at least two layers of fabric (the World Health Organization recommends three depending on the fabric used)*
- *cover your nose and mouth while allowing you to breathe comfortably*
- *fit comfortably but securely against the side of the face*
- *be secured to the head with ties or ear loops*
- *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*

### **How should a face covering be worn?**

Please take time this weekend to discuss with your child how their face covering should be worn correctly. I have attached Government and WHO guidance to this letter for you to share with your child. These measures will also be explained to students next week so that together we can continue to build upon the secure arrangements we have already developed in school.

For any child who is asthmatic, Asthma UK has provided some useful advice on how to support the wearing of face coverings. This can be accessed here:

<https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/triggers/coronavirus-covid-19/what-should-people-with-asthma-do-now/should-i-wear-a-face-mask-or-face-covering/>



## **Exemptions**

The Government has confirmed that some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. This applies to those who:

- cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment or disability
- speak to or provide assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate

Further detailed information can be found below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

If you believe that your child could be exempt from wearing a face covering then please contact your child's Year Leader in the first instance to discuss your individual circumstances.

## **Arrival and collection from school**

As outlined in Mr Ashworth's letter, I would ask all parents and carers to observe the following additional measures:

- ✓ **All adults to wear a face covering when visiting the school site** – please ensure you are wearing a face covering if standing to wait for your child on school campus or escorting them onto site in the morning
- ✓ **Parents/carers to arrive and leave promptly when dropping off/collecting your child** – please do not congregate and maintain social distancing

## **Communication**

A PowerPoint video presentation has been prepared which will be shown to students on Monday morning during registration. This will include full details on the additional measures we have put in place.

## **Responding to Confirmed Cases of Covid-19**

A number of parents and carers have contacted us this week enquiring as to how St Nicholas Catholic High School responds to any reported positive cases. I can inform you that we only contact the families of those students identified as a close contact of a positive case.



National and local guidance from Public Health England (PHE) provides schools with clear steps that must be taken should any positive case be reported. The school will identify any close contacts as defined by PHE. Close contact is considered to be:

- ✓ being coughed on, or
- ✓ having a face-to-face conversation within 1 metre, or
- ✓ having unprotected skin-to-skin physical contact, or
- ✓ travel in a small vehicle with the case, or
- ✓ any contact within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer without face-to-face contact or
- ✓ extended close contact (between 1 and 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with a positive case

All close contacts are then required to self-isolate for 14 days. This period of isolation begins 48 hours prior to the positive case developing symptoms and school will make contact with the relevant families to inform them of the next steps.

Finally, as we end our third full week of the Advent term together, I would once again like to take this opportunity to thank your children for their positive engagement in all that is being asked of them at this moment in time. Their positivity, enthusiasm and love of learning remains an inspiration to us all.

Yours sincerely

**Richard Woods**  
Headteacher

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