

2nd September 2020

Dear parents and carers,

Following the government's announcement regarding face coverings in school last week, I would like to update you on the position with Northallerton School & Sixth Form College, and across all ALT Trust schools.

At this stage, we will be following the government guidance that face coverings are not required in schools unless they are within a community that has local restrictions. The reasons for this decision are shown below.

In school, we have:

- established strict year group pod areas (or 'bubbles') with reduced/brief movement inside the building wherever possible;
- created external entrances to specialist teaching facilities so that students can transition between lessons outside;
- allocated a site entry and exit gate for each year group;
- ensured limited time is spent on breaks and lunch, that these are taken largely outside, and that they are staggered for different year groups;
- ensured that, where possible, students can wait in ventilated classrooms for the next teacher to arrive rather than wait on crowded corridors;
- made sure students have designated year group outdoor areas so that they do not to congregate in the building during breaks and lunches; and,
- planned to deliver remote assemblies broadcasted in students' tutor rooms.

These control measures, alongside the genuine concern that inappropriate use of face coverings can increase rather than decrease risk as well as create a false sense of security that undermines social distancing and good hygiene, mean it is **currently not necessary for us to introduce compulsory face coverings**. It remains the case that any student travelling on the bus will need to wear a face covering for the duration of their journey.

We will be reviewing our risk assessment carefully over the first few days of term; if we deem it necessary, the requirement for face coverings in communal areas could become compulsory at that stage. I would appreciate parents and carers ensuring their child has a supply of face coverings in the event of a change to our risk assessment, or in the event of local restrictions being imposed within our community.

If students and staff wish to wear a face covering in communal areas in school (i.e. outside of the classroom), they are welcome to do so. The government is still advising against the use of face coverings in classrooms due to the negative impact on learning and teaching. If there are specific reasons why your son or daughter needs to wear a face covering within the classroom, please contact me on enquiries@northallertonschool.org.uk so we can discuss the individual circumstances in the best interests of your child.

The Back to School guide previously shared with you is in the process of being amended and an updated version will be republished on the website before the end of the day.

I hope you are well, and we look forward to seeing all of our students next week.

Yours sincerely

Mrs V.E. Rahn
Head of School