

28 August 2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

## Face coverings at Downham Market Academy

As I am sure you are aware, the World Health Organisation has recently changed their advice around the use of face coverings for children. They now advise that “children aged 12 and over 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.”

In line with this guidance we now **recommend that all students and staff wear a face covering in corridors and indoor communal areas**. Whilst the Academy already has other measures in place to protect students and staff, the wearing of face coverings as advised will provide additional reassurance. By prioritising the external routes around the buildings to and from classrooms, the time spent moving through corridors will be minimal and this will be reinforced with students every morning as a reminder. Please also remember that **students travelling to the Academy by bus or taxi should wear a face covering for the duration of the journey**.

The use of face coverings in classrooms is *not* recommended due to the measures required of schools, set out in the DfE full opening guide however if students or staff wish to wear a face covering, they are able to do so as long as it does not distract from the learning environment.

It is absolutely crucial that face coverings are used correctly and safely for them to be an effective measure in preventing transmission of Covid-19. The following advice has been published by the Department of Health & Social Care regarding the use of face coverings and I have attached two infographics from the World Health Organisation on the use of face coverings:

### A face covering should:

- 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
- 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 Organisation recommends three depending on the fabric used)
- 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

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**When wearing a face covering you should:**

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on
- avoid wearing on your neck or forehead
- avoid touching the part of the face covering in contact with your mouth and nose, as it could be contaminated with the virus
- change the face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
- avoid taking it off and putting it back on a lot in quick succession

**When removing a face covering:**

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before removing
- only handle the straps, ties or clips
- do not give it to someone else to use
- if single-use, dispose of it carefully in a residual waste bin and do not recycle
- if reusable, store in a sealable bag and wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions at the highest temperature appropriate for the fabric
- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser once removed

If your child is wearing a face covering whilst walking through corridors, as they arrive to the lesson and before entering the room they will need to sanitise their hands (using their own personal supply); remove the face covering as they enter the room and store it in a bag that can be sealed and then re-sanitise their hands before they sit down. Hand sanitiser dispensers has been installed in every classroom if students forget to bring their own supply that day.

In the event of local intervention or lockdown the wearing of face coverings will be made mandatory. We will continue to monitor health and government advice closely and will update our procedures accordingly.

Thank you for your continued support – we are really looking forward to seeing every back at school in a few days' time.

Kind regards



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