



ST JOHN PAYNE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

27th August 2020

Dear Parents & Carers

I write to clarify our position in response to the WHO announcing that children should wear masks under the same conditions as adults, in particular where they cannot maintain at least a 1m distance from others and where transmission is widespread. Whilst revised government guidance does not stipulate face coverings are necessary, Headteachers are required to use discretion in requiring their use in communal areas. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/update-on-face-coverings-in-schools>

In areas of high transmission, government has advised that masks be worn by adults and children when moving around school and in communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain. In such circumstances, there is not the need for masks to be worn in classrooms, where protective measures reduce risk and where they could be detrimental to learning.

As throughout partial school closure and in welcoming students in Years 10 & 12 for face to face contact in the summer term, students and staff are welcome to wear a mask if they wish - irrespective of government guidance, both during lessons and when moving about the site. The following link provides guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>

With Essex not a high transmission area, we are confident the measures detailed in our risk assessment allow us to maintain distance between Year group bubbles in designated zones. We have therefore decided against making masks compulsory. However, they are required on public and school buses, and particular consideration should be given to their use in the following situations.

- walking to and from school in close proximity with friends from other Year bubbles
- arriving at school and walking to their designated area
- queueing at service points or awaiting entry to a class
- using toilet facilities

As with all matters pertaining to the public health emergency, this issue naturally generates a range of firmly held opinion. In the interests of ensuring a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for all concerned, we ask that all parties remain respectful of individual choice.

We will maintain our liaison with local schools and continue to monitor developing guidance. I assure you the health and safety of our whole community remains our guiding principle. Please contact your child's Head of Year or a member of the Senior Leadership Team if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

Mr T. Coen

Headteacher

