



Holy Family Catholic School & Sixth Form

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Letter to Parents/Carers

26th November 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

In line with the national guidance, due to the current high levels of COVID, Waltham Forest's Director of Public Health has advised all secondary schools to **reintroduce face coverings in communal areas for pupils**, unless they are exempt.

There are currently high rates of coronavirus transmission in schools. Wearing a face covering can reduce the risk of the spread of infection to your child and other pupils because they cover the nose and mouth, which are the main confirmed sources of transmission of coronavirus.

What does this mean?

This means that from Tuesday 30th November 2021 your child should bring a suitable face covering to school with them to wear in communal areas such as the canteen, corridors, assembly halls, etc. There is currently no requirement for face coverings to be worn in classrooms, though this may be considered if there is an outbreak at the school.

What sort of face coverings are suitable?

There are many types of face coverings available. A face covering should:

- cover your nose and mouth while allowing you to breathe comfortably (a nose wire may help with fit)
- 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 2 layers of fabric
- 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. Single-use disposable masks should not be washed and reused

Wherever possible, face coverings should be reusable because of the environmental impact of single-use disposable masks.

Who is exempt?

There are some circumstances where pupils may not be able to wear a face covering. These include (but are not limited to):

- children under the age of 11

ASPIRE TO THE HOLY FAMILY WAY

- people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- where the putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause severe distress
- instances where people are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate
- to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others

What else can I do to reduce the risk of COVID-19?

There are many things you and your child can do to reduce the risk of COVID-19:

- All children aged 12 and older are eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine. Along with our in-school clinics, we've also got lots of options for you to take your child to a clinic after school or at the weekend to get their vaccine out of school. You will need to pre-book your child's slot by visiting <https://bit.ly/12-15bookingWF> or by calling 119.
- Testing remains important in reducing the risk of COVID-19 spreading, by catching cases as early as possible. Regular testing will mean that even cases of COVID-19 where symptoms don't appear can be detected, helping to stop the spread. Parents and children aged 11 and over should test twice weekly at home, with lateral flow device (LFD) test kits, 3 to 4 days apart.
- You, or anyone in your household, should self-isolate at home and arrange a PCR test as soon as possible if they develop any of the main three symptoms:
 - a new continuous cough
 - a high temperature
 - a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of smell or taste (anosmia)

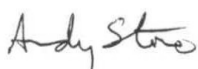
Even those who are fully vaccinated are still required to isolate if they develop symptoms, until they get a negative test result.

As a reminder, any adult in the household who has not received 2 vaccine doses is also required to isolate while waiting for the results, but children without symptoms can still attend school as normal.

- If your child develops **any** other symptoms, they should get a PCR test. This includes wider symptoms which are new, persistent or unusual such as flu-like symptoms, muscle ache or pain, excessive tiredness, persistent headache, runny or blocked nose, sore throat and/or hoarseness, shortness of breath or wheezing, nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea. Your child is NOT required to isolate while waiting for the PCR test on the basis of these symptoms, and should still come to school as normal, if well enough and appropriate to do so (as a reminder, children should not return to school within 48 hours of vomiting or diarrhoea). Details on how to get a PCR test can be found at <https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/content/covid-19-testing>

I would like to thank you again for your support and cooperation during this challenging time.

Yours sincerely



Dr Andy Stone
Headteacher