



In all things faithful

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Headteacher

Mr S Logue BA (Hons), M.Ed., NPQH

28th August 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Face coverings in educational settings

From 1 September 2020, new advice will apply to the use of face coverings by staff and pupils in schools and other education institutions that teach pupils in Years 7 and above in England. This guidance can be found on the Government [website](#). In areas where local restrictions are in place, including Tameside, it will be mandatory for students and staff to wear a face covering in school areas where social distancing is difficult.

The wearing of face coverings puts in place an additional prevention measure to reduce the transmission risk of COVID-19, alongside other important measures we have in place in school including:

- Social distancing where possible
- Hand washing for at least 20 secs with soap and water or hand sanitisation
- Encouraging good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- Enhanced cleaning in the school

I am therefore writing to you to inform you that when your child returns to school next week they **will be required** to wear a face covering in the school in areas where it may be particularly difficult to maintain social distancing as staff and pupils are moving around the premises.

I would like to take this opportunity to strongly reassure parents and pupils that the guidance has not come into place because schools are considered a high risk environment for COVID-19, but that the wearing of face coverings is an additional prevention measure to help ensure the transmission of COVID-19 remains low in the borough.

What constitutes a face covering and where to access one?

Please can you ensure that your child comes to school with a face covering every day. The national guidance definition of a face covering is something which safely covers the nose and mouth. Reusable or single-use face coverings can be worn. It is important that face coverings are appropriate and don't have any slogans on them.

Where and when to wear a face covering?

When in St Damian's, it is compulsory at the following times for pupils and staff to wear a face covering;

- When moving around the corridors and going up and down stairs
- When queuing for food in the dining room, piazza or at the mobile food points
- When in communal areas such as the piazza, Spanish Steps, library and toilet areas
- When in the Technology & Science Hub areas

NB. Face coverings will also not be needed in outdoor spaces and the above will be reviewed as and when necessary.

Face coverings will not be necessary in the classroom as the school has put in place a system of controls for minimising risk, including keeping children in consistent groups and ensuring greater physical distancing by staff and children within classrooms. Face coverings can have a negative impact on communication, learning and teaching.

Masks and school uniform

As you are aware St Damian's has high standards with regards to our uniform. We are the envy of many schools and pupils are proud when wearing their uniform. For the foreseeable future, masks are now officially part of the school uniform. Therefore, I ask that you do not purchase masks that have slogans and/or masks that have pictures. I understand that some parents may have bought patterned masks. But please ensure that these are appropriate for a school setting. In the near future a simple one colour washable mask will be required. Further details will follow in due course.

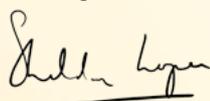
What can you do as a parent or carer?

It is vital that face coverings are worn correctly. Clear instructions will be provided to staff, children and young people on [how to put on, remove, store and dispose of face coverings](#) to avoid unknowingly increasing the risks of transmission of the virus. Therefore, before returning to school, I would like to encourage parents and carers to support their child to feel comfortable wearing a face covering by practising the handling of the face covering, putting it on and off safely, using the guidance provided, and storing it whilst not in use. Please would you also supply a small plastic bag in which your child's face mask can be stored safely and hygienically during lessons when it is not needed.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all pupils, their families and staff in supporting this additional prevention measure. If you have any questions or concerns or you are struggling to access face coverings or you feel your child will be unable to wear a face covering or has a medical exemption, please contact Mrs Biggs at school. I will respond to all queries.

Looking forward to seeing your child start back next week.

Mr Logue



Headteacher.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Government Guidance:

Face coverings: when to wear one and how to make your own

<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>

2. Asthma UK

Should I wear a face mask or face covering?

<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/>

3. Epilepsy Action

Are face coverings (face masks) safe for people with epilepsy?

<https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/info/daily-life/safety/coronavirus-covid-19>

4. Disability Right UK

Disabled people exempt from transport face covering rules

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2020/june/disabled-people-exempt-transport-face-covering-rules>