

26 August 2020

Dear Parent

First, please accept my apologies for a second letter following so soon after the letter dated 24th August, but national guidelines on students' return to school next week have changed again and I need to inform you as quickly as possible of what this will mean for your child.

As predicted in Monday's letter, the rules about the wearing of face-masks in English schools have now fallen more closely into line with those being introduced in Scotland. Schools in areas of high infection **MUST** insist that all students and staff wear face-masks in corridors and public areas; other schools are now being given the flexibility to insist upon the wearing of face-masks in these areas. I am glad that we have now been given this flexibility – previous guidance prevented us from encouraging students' use of face-masks and this was a concern for us.

Although Wigan has now been excluded from the extra restrictions that apply across much of the North West, our school circumstances make it sensible for us to make the wearing of face-masks compulsory in corridors and public areas. Our building does not make social distancing easy and there is significant movement around the building between lessons. Although we have taken every precaution to create year group bubbles, it must be sensible to apply this extra level of protection for students and staff now that it has become a possibility for us. As I have said all along, our first priority is the health and safety of our students, staff and wider families and this decision is in line with that priority.

In summary, students and staff **MUST**, from the start of term, wear face-masks in corridors and communal areas. It is not practical for masks to be compulsory in lessons, but social distancing is being carefully applied during lesson time and this reduces the risk. We will need to get students firmly into the habit of putting on a face-mask just before they leave a lesson and taking it off carefully when asked to do so by the teacher at the start of their next lesson. Further guidance on the safe use of masks will be provided once students return to school, but in the meantime you may want to click on the following link - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-52606128>

As stated in the previous letter, reusable masks must be plain, without pictures, words or patterns. This is to avoid face-masks becoming either a new (potentially expensive) fashion item or an item that might cause offence to others. As these new Government guidelines have appeared so late in the holiday, however, we recognise that some students may not have plain masks available during the first couple of days of term and common sense will be applied when we deal with students. Disposable, “surgical” type masks remain an acceptable alternative.

If there is a medical reason why your child is unable to wear a mask, do please let us know via your child’s Head of Year or through the [questions@flhs.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:questions@flhs.wigan.sch.uk) email address.

We remain excited about welcoming our students back to school next week and I must stress that these measures are simply a sensible precaution to keep our school community as safe as possible.

Yours sincerely



MRS J GARRETTS  
Headteacher