



STATEMENT ON THE USE OF FACE COVERINGS IN SCHOOLS ACROSS THE ST THOMAS CATHOLIC ACADEMIES TRUST

Across each one of the schools in our Trust a huge amount of work has been undertaken in order to prepare for the start of the new academic year. On Wednesday 26th August, Directors reviewed plans for the opening of schools and agreed that each school was ready thanks to the great work of colleagues across the Trust.

Face coverings:

Considering the updated advice from the WHO, the new guidance from the Department for Education, the Trust has determined:

i. Type of face covering:

Communication is everything in our schools. Our students need to be able to see our faces to read expression, secure reassurance and comfort in the people they trust the most. It is for this reason we are asking all staff who wish to wear a face covering to use a visor rather than a mask.

ii. Staff:

- All staff are free to wear a visor face covering should they wish to do so.
- Staff may elect to wear a clear mask providing it in no way inhibits communication with students.
- Staff are responsible for the care of any face covering, ensuring they adopt strict hygiene standards (hand washing / sanitising) – especially at any point they may touch their own face covering.
- The requirement to wear a face covering as outlined above will become mandatory for all staff in secondary schools the event of a local lockdown.

iii. Students

The Trust recognises the evidence around the need to wear a face mask has changed significantly. As a result, even though government guidance is that it is not necessary for any children in schools to wear a mask outside of a local lockdown, we understand it will provide reassurance to students and families in the early stages of a return to school. We anticipate that schools will support parents

and carers in reviewing the need to wear a mask as the rate of transmission in schools is more fully understood over time.

- All students in all settings will be allowed to wear masks outside of the classroom setting
- It is the responsibility of the individual to care for any face covering, ensuring they adopt strict hygiene standards (hand washing / sanitising) at any point they may touch their own face covering to avoid the transmission of virus from covering to surfaces others may touch.
- The requirement to wear a face covering as outlined above will become mandatory for all secondary aged students in the event of a local lockdown.

iv. Visitors and contractors:

- All visitors and contractors must leave track and trace details at the school reception
- Visitors must wear a mask at all times
- Contractors must wear a mask if working at a distance of 2m or less from any member of the school community
- Where contractors are working at a safe distance from members of the school community, the wearing of face coverings should be in accordance with the company's COVID secure procedures.

v. Future changes

In both primary and secondary settings, the Trust will continue to review evidence and guidance from the Department for Education and health bodies, including evidence from across countries in Europe where the wearing of a face covering extends to the classroom, to ensure that we adopt the best strategies at each point in time.

Joe Richardson, Strategic Executive Leader

27th August 2020