

05 November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Following my e-mail yesterday to confirm the wearing of face masks in lessons at Copleston I thought that a few further points of clarification might help.

- Students are not expected to wear masks when they are in a PE lesson
- Students and staff must wear masks as soon as they are on the school site. This is no change from our stance in September
- Students and staff must wear masks when moving around the site even when they are outside. Again, this is no change from September
- Students and staff that are medically exempt from wearing a mask will not need to wear a mask
- The school is aware of those students that may be hindered by the wearing of masks in lessons (eg hearing impaired students) and has taken steps to deal with this. A significant number of masks with clear areas around the mouth have been purchased.
- It is of course necessary for all masks to be removed when students and staff are eating or drinking.

As a school, we understand that the wearing of masks is not particularly comfortable. Indeed, this also applies to wearing them in and around wider society. We also are very aware that the requirement to wear masks is a potential increased strain on well-being. However, as we re-enter a national lockdown it is clear that the virus is having a significant impact once again. Yesterday saw over 21,000 cases and 492 deaths, which is the highest rate since May of this year.

In the previous national lockdown schools had to completely close to all but a small number of students for 4 months and we know that the government have plans (as outlined in the tiered system for schools) to either fully or partially close individual schools where this becomes necessary.

I am aware that the wearing of masks at all times does bring a degree of anxiety for some, but I hope that our focus on health and safety and our desire to remain open as a school will have an overwhelmingly positive impact on well-being.

At Copleston we have always tried to go the extra mile to keep our school safe for your children and we will continue to do that. This is both to protect them and their families from the virus as much as possible but also so that we can provide an excellent education to them every day.

I know that locally, nationally and internationally there is much debate as to how the virus should be managed. At Copleston we will continue to do our best for your children and I thank you for your support

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

over the face mask decision within an establishment that has nearly 2000 students and 250 members of staff.

Finally, please do note that this decision on facemasks will be reviewed at the end of this lockdown period.

With my very best wishes

Mr AB Green

Principal