

Friday 14th May 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

RE: Operational Updates – Facemasks!

I hope this letter finds you well. Following the government's announcement earlier this week I'm writing to share our expectations regarding the wearing of facemasks from Monday 17th May.

You can read the full guidance here: [Face coverings in education guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/91111/face-coverings-in-education-guidance)

With a summary as follows:

"From 17 May, in line with Step 3 of the roadmap, face coverings will no longer be recommended for pupils and students in classrooms or communal areas, in all schools and FE providers. Face coverings will also no longer be recommended for staff in classrooms. In all schools and FE providers, we continue to recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and visitors in situations outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas) The reintroduction of face coverings for pupils, students or staff may be advised for a temporary period in response to particular localised outbreaks, including variants of concern. In all cases, any educational drawbacks should be balanced with the benefits of managing transmission."

This means that from Monday, students will no longer be required to wear a facemask or exemption lanyard when attending Oak Academy. Staff will no longer challenge students and the decision to wear a facemask will be entirely voluntary.

No-one will be prevented from wearing a facemask in line with our previously published guidelines should they wish to, and despite the latest government announcement, I do believe that many students will still feel happier continuing to wear a mask. Staff and visitors will still be required to wear a facemask or exemption lanyard when moving around the site (indoors) or in communal (indoor) areas.

I personally would have preferred a 'scaling down' of facemask wearing rather than an overnight removal altogether, and in light of recent developments regarding the new India variant, I am strongly encouraging all students to continue wearing facemasks in the same way as staff - when moving around the site (indoors) or in communal (indoor) areas.

We will certainly know more closer to June 21st, but with recent news suggesting that the further easing of restrictions may be slowed, a continuation of our current practice in keeping the risk of infection transmission as low as possible does seem the best way forward.

We will of course respect your right to decide what is best for your children in this regard, and remain on hand to support in all things, very much keeping learning and well-being at the heart of what we do.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Burgas
Principal

Oak Academy

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