

6 November 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Face coverings are to be worn in schools from Monday, 9 November

I will start by saying thank you for your fantastic efforts in helping to keep our community safe. Every day our students and community are responding brilliantly to all the demands and challenges brought on by the pandemic. We continue to do all we can to keep our community safe during these challenging times by following all guidance and taking all the steps we can to control the virus.

In the light of the latest guidance issued to schools on Thursday, 5 November:

'Guidance on what the new national restrictions mean for education and childcare settings'

In schools where pupils in Year 7 and above are educated and further education colleges, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Face coverings should also be worn by pupils in Year 7 and above when travelling on dedicated school transport to secondary schools or on public transport to college.

I would like to highlight our new expectations regarding practices to ensure the Open Academy remains a COVID-19 safe Academy.

Face Coverings

- From Monday, 9 November 2020 all students and adults, including 6th Form, will be required to wear a face covering whilst inside the school buildings in communal areas and corridors for instance when travelling between lesson.
- Please ensure face coverings are logo free and appropriate for the formal school setting. Further guidance on what a face covering is can be found on the back of this letter.
- Staff have the right, at their own discretion, to request students to remove these in the classroom when learning would be compromised or for disciplinary or identification reasons.
- For clarity this means that students will wear masks at all times inside the building until they are sat in lessons or sat in the designated seating in their lunch area. Once they are moving around the Academy they must wear a mask.

OPEN Academy

Principal: Jon Ford BSc (Hons), FRSA

Salhouse Road
Norwich NR7 9DL

T 01603 481640
F 01603 403662
E office@open-academy.org.uk
W www.open-academy.org.uk



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- If you believe that your child requires medical exemption from this rule, please send them in with a note detailing the issue with them on Monday, 9 November. We will communicate this information to staff via our internal systems, however if during the first few days they retain your note of explanation they will only need to show this when challenged to avoid sanction.
- Given the heightened risks from the virus at this time, we will take any breaches of this and all our safety regulations very seriously and repeated failure to behave safely will result in your child having to receive their education from home.

Other regulations

- There will be no visitors, including parents, allowed on site from 5 November 2020 (unless in exceptional circumstances agreed by prior arrangement). Parent meetings will usually need to be conducted online or by telephone.
- Please do not come into the Academy reception area, even to pick up or drop off items, without prior arrangement.
- Students should travel in cars with household members only, or they will need to wear a face covering, and the vehicle should be well ventilated.
- Students need to continue to attend school full time in our COVID safe environment. If you have particular concerns regarding attendance at this time, please contact me.

Finally, please can I ask that you continue to keep the Academy safe by isolating your child if they have any of the COVID symptoms, or if they have contact with anyone who has tested positive.

Thank you for your ongoing support as we tackle this pandemic together and face the changing situation. I will continue to update our practice along with guidance, which we will communicate through letters and/or through my weekly newsletter.

Kindest regards



Jon Ford
Principal

What a face covering is

In the context of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, a face covering is something which safely covers the nose and mouth. You can buy reusable or single-use face coverings. You may also use a scarf, bandana, religious garment or hand-made cloth covering, but these must securely fit round the side of the face.

Face coverings are not classified as PPE (personal protective equipment) which is used in a limited number of settings to protect wearers against hazards and risks, such as surgical masks or respirators used in medical and industrial settings.

Face coverings are instead largely intended to protect others, not the wearer, against the spread of infection because they cover the nose and mouth, which are the main confirmed sources of transmission of virus that causes coronavirus infection (COVID-19).

Reminder: Symptoms of COVID-19

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

If your child or anyone in the household does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from NHS 111 at:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/

or by phoning 111.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19.

Do

- Follow the guidance on social distancing
- wash your hands with soap and water often — do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards.

Further information is available at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/