



CULLODEN
ACADEMY

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Dear Parents/Carers,

In my letter to parents on 14th August I said that “we follow the national advice and the national position at time of writing this is that face masks are not compulsory in school but anyone who wants to wear one can. The primary reasons for wearing masks is to prevent the spread of the virus and that is why staff really appreciate it when pupils do wear masks in school. Some activities only work safely if pupils do wear masks and once again I am asking for your support in making Culloden Academy a safe and productive learning environment.” As you will be aware that national advice has now changed and the Scottish Government Guidance is that from 31st August **face coverings should be worn in corridors, communal areas and school buses**. Below are a series of questions and answers which we hope will help you explain this new expectation to your child in the coming days.

Why has the guidance changed?

The volume of evidence supporting the initial scientific position on a key benefit of face coverings (protection of others from infection by the wearer) has grown. There is also emerging evidence to suggest that the wearer of a face covering can be protected.

When will pupils have to wear face coverings?

“Face coverings should also be worn in the following circumstances (except where an adult or child/young person is exempt from wearing a covering):

- where adults and young people in secondary schools (including special schools and independent and grant aided schools) are moving about the school in corridors and confined communal areas (including toilets) where physical distancing is particularly difficult to maintain; and*
- in line with the current arrangements for public transport, where adults and children and young people aged 5 and over are travelling on dedicated school transport (see School Transport section).” SG August 2020*

Where are our communal areas?

Corridors, stairs, the foyer area at the front, toilets, pupils in the library for any length of time and any indoor areas identified for the different year groups during interval and lunchtime. Pupils will also be expected to wear face coverings as they arrive through their designated entrances each morning. Pupils are obviously exempt from wearing masks when eating. Pupils will not have to wear masks in our outside spaces.

Do pupils have to wear a face covering in the classroom?

“Face coverings should not generally be required in classrooms or other learning and teaching environments. However, face coverings should be worn by adults where they cannot keep 2m distance and are interacting face-to-face for a sustained period (about 15 minutes or more) with other adults and/or children and young people.” August 2020

Pupils may be asked to wear a mask in class for a short period of time where an activity is taking place which makes it difficult to maintain 2m social distancing. The revised guidance suggests that there may be a further tightening up of expectations in this area as evidence is gathered from the re-opening of schools. It states that;

“Individual local authorities and secondary schools (including special schools and independent and grant aided schools) may wish, following the relevant local authority processes and appropriate risk assessment and consultation with school communities, to consider strengthening the use of face coverings in other areas of the school (e.g. classrooms) to address specific local circumstances (e.g. particular concerns or anxieties around distancing or confidence building in the context of local or wider outbreaks).

An example of this local “stepping up” of measures may be the use of face coverings in secondary school classrooms where any form of distancing is impossible, in circumstances where increased community transmission is being seen.”

Obviously we will keep the community involved as this situation develops.

Do staff all have to wear face coverings?

As per the statement above, where staff cannot keep 2m distance then they should wear a face covering. Pupils are being asked to wear face coverings when moving in the corridor – if staff are in the corridor during period changes then they should also wear a face covering. When on duty in the canteen and corridors, SMT will wear face coverings.

How do we decide if a child is exempt?

“In making any such local decisions on the stepping up of use of face coverings, it will remain vitally important to consider the potential impact on children and young people, including via the appropriate use of Equality Impact Assessments.” SG August 2020

Pupil Support will be involved in identifying pupils who are exempt and will communicate with families. Parents will also be asked to contact the school at culloden.academy@highland.gov.uk with details if they think that their child should be exempt. We will be issuing some form of pass for pupils in this category.

What if a child refuses to wear a face covering?

“No-one should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering. See the section on Supporting the Wellbeing of Children and Young People for guidance addressing concerns regarding adherence to school policy or procedure.” SG August 2020

There is clearly a difference between the child who is refusing because of genuine anxiety, and the child who is simply choosing not to comply. There will need to be further guidance on both these scenarios.

Does this mean some of the other measures in place will go?

No, the use of face coverings is another safety layer.

“Use of face covering in the circumstances set out in this guidance should be seen as just one mitigation within a package of measures.” SG August 2020

However, what the introduction of face coverings may do is allow some types of teaching and class organisation to become more manageable. For example, it may be possible for small groups of pupils to come forward and look at a short demonstration if pupils and staff are all wearing face coverings. Please note however that the 2m staff pupil distancing rule remains the default position.

Will the school provide face coverings?

Pupils will be expected to provide and take responsibility for their own face coverings. However, we will have a limited supply available in school.

What is the guidance about how to use face masks?

The key points are as follows:

- *Face coverings should not be shared with others.*
- *Before putting on or removing the face covering, hands should be cleaned by washing with soap and water or hand sanitiser.*
- *Make sure the face covering is the right size to cover the nose, mouth and chin. Children should be taught how to wear the face covering properly, including not touching the front and not pulling it under the chin or into their mouth.*
- *When temporarily storing a face covering (e.g. during classes), it should be placed in a washable, sealed bag or container. Avoid placing it on surfaces, due to the possibility of contamination.*
- *Re-usable face coverings should be washed after each day of use in school at 60 degrees centigrade or in boiling water.*
- *Disposable face coverings must be disposed of safely and hygienically. Children and young people should be encouraged not to litter and to place their face coverings in the general waste bin. They are not considered to be clinical waste in the same way that used PPE may be.*

Best wishes,



Dr J Vance