



13th May 2021

Dear Staff, Students, Parents and Carers

Masks in School and a Questionnaire to Help us Plan for the Future

You will be aware that as part of the government announcement of changes taking place from next Monday (17th May) a decision has been taken about the use of masks in schools across the country.

The guidance has been amended to reflect that from the above date *'face coverings will no longer be recommended for pupils and students in classrooms or communal areas, in all schools and colleges. Face coverings will also no longer be recommended for staff in classrooms. In all schools and colleges, the Government continues to recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and visitors in situations outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible.'*

Importantly, the guidance also says: *"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.."*

Now that this decision has been taken, we at Chew Valley, in line with other schools, will not require masks to be used; however they will still be required to be used by students whilst using buses as their means of transport. It is really important to understand that the government have reached this decision based on factors such as the local rates of infection and the fact that students are self-testing at home twice a week and this should therefore continue. Our bubbles will remain for this period.

I am very aware that many people have differing views on the use of masks in school and I have spent time talking to individual parents and carers during the past few months who often have very opposing opinions. I have asked our staff for feedback as well as talking to some focus groups of students and some of them are understandably anxious about this change.

It is really important therefore that if staff or students wish to remain using either masks or any other personal protective equipment (PPE) in or away from lessons that they are able to do this. One of the areas we talk about regularly is building a school community based on mutual respect and positive relationships and within this understanding that other people may have differing views. I therefore will ask that all members of our school community are able to make decisions without any comment or comeback from others. As you can see from the detail, staff will be using masks in areas such as corridors where social distancing is not possible.

We will wait for the next announcement in June when hopefully if it is deemed safe to do so we will look to return to vertical tutoring and students travelling to departmental areas rather than being in bubbles.

In addition, as a school we are looking at our planning for the next academic year and to help us with this we are asking for parents and carers, along with governors, staff and students*, to give us feedback on questions around the following areas. (**Students will be completing the questionnaire in their tutor groups, there is no requirement for students to complete the questionnaire individually*).

- What have we learnt from COVID?
- What have we missed? What are we looking forward to having back?
- What elements or ways of doing things from lockdown would we like to keep?

We would really appreciate it if you could click on the following link and complete the questionnaire
[Plans for the Future Questionnaire](#)

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Beynon', with a horizontal line underneath.

Gareth Beynon
Headteacher