



4th March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Testing and the Wearing of Masks in School

The staff at Chew Valley School are looking forward to having students back with us starting next week and much time and effort has been put in by large numbers of staff to make sure that this is done in a way that meets all of the government guidelines. We have been receiving questions from parents and carers over the detail of testing in school and the wearing of masks and we wish to respond to this.

The school has a risk assessment that has been updated and has been agreed with the trustees at Lighthouse Schools Partnership (LSP) and will be placed on the school website by the weekend so that all parents and carers can read carefully what has been put in place. The Risk Assessment is based on the guidance from the Department of Education and Public Health England and the Trust's external Health and Safety Advisor.

It is important when we return that we use a range of measures to keep students and staff safe such as hand sanitation and ventilation along with masks and testing. Although they cannot eliminate every risk, together these measures make the school significantly safer.

Testing and the wearing of masks in classrooms are key factors in the government's decision to re-open schools as early as possible, and their necessity will be reviewed at Easter, in just a few weeks' time. I hope by then they may be able to change the rule on mask wearing in classrooms but only so long as it is safe to do so due to a change in the national picture. In the meantime it is important to acknowledge that as a community we have a responsibility not just to ourselves but to others who share our school with us bearing in mind we will have a large number of people on site.

The trustees of LSP have given ourselves, along with Backwell and Gordano schools, clear direction of how this is to happen via a letter from Gary Lewis, our CEO, which can be viewed [here](#).

We intend to follow the DfE control measures that require face coverings to be worn in classrooms (as well as communal indoor spacings) unless two metres distance can be maintained at all times. This is not the case in our classrooms for the vast majority of occasions and therefore masks are to be worn unless there is an exemption for a specific medical reason. For those students who are exempt, we will provide a badge or lanyard so that this can be seen by staff and other students. Students who do not have a badge or lanyard will be challenged by staff on health and safety grounds and we will have the option of carrying on their learning in an alternative location. Staff will also wear masks unless they can guarantee they will be more than two metres away from students. In classrooms these areas are marked clearly on the floor for all to see.

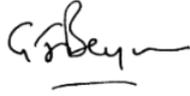
In line with government guidance, whilst it is strongly encouraged, the taking part in the asymptomatic testing programme is voluntary. Based on consents received so far, we are expecting the vast majority of students to take part in this programme. We do not have the resources or space in school to segregate students into those who have and have not been tested.

We are aware that there are differing views on masks and testing with parents and carers on both sides passionate about their views. We have worked tirelessly to make sure that Chew Valley School has provided as good a remote learning experience as possible and have continued that into a large

logistical exercise of bringing students back following government guidelines and taking legal advice in order to do the best we can for all of our community.

We continue to look forward to seeing the students back at school.

With best wishes



Gareth Beynon
Headteacher



Phil Heath
Chair of Governors