



27th August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Start of the New Academic Year at Chew Valley School - The Use of Masks

My apologies for needing to write to you once more following my letter dated 18th August where I set out the detail for students returning to school next week. Like many things at the present moment in time, discussion has moved forward at a national level around the wearing of masks during the school day. My family and myself, as with the rest of you no doubt, have become used to wearing our masks when entering shops for some time now and their use has been shown by health professionals to reduce the risk of Covid-19 in certain situations.

We had already taken the decision to allow students to wear masks in school if these made them feel more comfortable. In addition, many of our students travel daily on a bus or minibuss and the wearing of masks on these is required. We had said that students who wished to wear one in school as well as on the buses would need a separate mask for travel and another for around the school.

You will no doubt have followed the debate and subsequent announcement on the news from the government over the last few days. The statement was that secondary schools will have the "discretion" to require face coverings in communal areas, where social distancing is not possible. However, they will be mandatory for schools in parts of England that are under local lockdown or facing extra government restrictions. All schools in Scotland are using face masks.

We have taken the decision, in line with the other secondary schools in the Lighthouse Schools Partnership (LSP), Backwell and Gordano, and many other local schools, to ask all students to have a mask with them every day in school, to be worn in corridors and communal areas, including where they are queuing for food. There are also scenarios in classrooms where at times wearing a mask would be deemed to be the right thing to do.

We are asking each student next week to arrive in school with a mask. The mask needs to be fit for purpose and also fit with the ethos and values of the school with regards to any visible markings. A bandana/scarf or similar would not be appropriate to be worn. We are asking students to have somewhere appropriate in their bag for the mask to be when not in use.

We are aware that for a very small number of students where they have a clear medical condition, wearing a mask would not be appropriate. If your child fits into this category then can we ask that you email us on masks@chewvalleyschool.co.uk so that we are aware of this and can let staff know.

Again can I apologise for the need to write at this late stage before the start of the term and to ask you to provide a mask for your child; however I am sure that you will understand the context.

The school has continued to follow guidance and if anything changes then we will of course inform parents and carers of any change at this time.

With best wishes

Gareth Beynon
Headteacher