



28 October 2020

### Subject: Face coverings

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are no longer recommending the wearing of face coverings indoors and in classrooms by children in Years 6 to 11. We have taken this decision, after a number of very useful discussions with Public Health Worcestershire (PHW) and The Local Authority. We are also mindful that the wearing of face coverings in the classroom isn't currently recommended by the DFE and Public Health England (PHE) and to our knowledge no other schools in the country are insisting on the wearing of face coverings in the classroom at this present time.

The latest data confirms that the rates of COVID-19 in Wychavon, although rising, are lower than the England and Worcestershire average and evidence indicates that where transmission is taking place, it tends to be between and within households and not in schools.

Our recommendation for the wearing of face coverings for the Sixth Form in communal areas remains, given the particular constraints within their zones and their use of private study and common room areas.

However, please do note that our children are able to wear face coverings in the classroom, should they wish, and this has been our position from September. In this case, please do ensure you have followed all the guidance, in particular that from the World Health Organisation:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Tv2BVN\\_WTk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Tv2BVN_WTk)

Both the Local Authority and PHW have commended our efforts in helping to keep our staff, our children and families safe throughout the return to school. Indeed, they have reassured my governors and me that we currently have in place all the measures recommended and strong evidence that we have been very effective in minimising transmission at TDMS. They have assured me that the pros and cons of wearing face coverings will continue to be thoroughly debated by both the DFE and PHE, and that the Local Authority will continue to provide schools with as much guidance as possible to help us to keep everyone as safe as possible.

### Next Steps

We are delighted that PHW and the Local Authority will be undertaking some specific and innovative work with us at TDMS. Firstly, they will be conducting a focus group to collect insights with some of our children to really understand their anxieties, to then inform us on how we can all support our children's understanding and their ability to manage their way through the pandemic. Secondly, they will be looking at the safety measures in place at TDMS, to help identify good practice that can be shared to the benefit of

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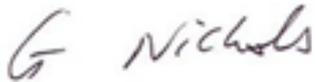


not only our community but other communities too and finally they will advise us on any areas of further improvement.

I am extremely proud of our children and our staff, and especially the courage of those asking for this debate to be conducted in the interests of safety. It has provided an invaluable opportunity to improve our understanding of how we can best tackle the virus together. It has supported wider discussion and placed our school at the forefront in the battle to acquire better understanding, which is a very positive outcome.

We will continue to keep all of our risk assessment decisions under review.

Thank you for your continued support of our school.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Guy Nichols". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "G".

Guy Nichols