



The use of face coverings at St John's from 8 March 2021

Aims

To lower the risk of community transmission of Covid-19 for both staff and pupils by following the precautions recommended by the World Health Organisation and Department for Education.

To ensure continuity of education by minimising the spread of Covid-19 and therefore the need for staff and pupils to self-isolate.

To meet our obligations as an employer to keep staff as safe as possible.

Rationale

St John's aims to meet the above aims whilst balancing the need for the impact on the quality of education to be minimised. The rationale for this policy is based on the following advice from the World Health Organisation that the following five measures can help limit the spread of Covid-19:

1. The use of face coverings.
2. Hand hygiene.
3. Physical distancing.
4. Cough and sneeze into elbows.
5. Good ventilation.

The Department for Education guidance states:

"Where pupils and students in year 7 and above are educated, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff, pupils and students when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Face coverings do not need to be worn by pupils and students when outdoors on the premises. In addition, we now also recommend that in those settings where pupils and students in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn in classrooms and during activities unless social distancing can be maintained. This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons."

The full guidance on face coverings in education can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/964351/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf

One of the increased risk factors noted is time spent in close proximity to others in closed spaces; therefore, it is considered that face coverings can help mitigate this. It is also noted that face coverings are largely to protect others as opposed to the wearer.

Procedure

Face coverings should be worn indoors by staff and pupils, at all times, when a two metre social distance cannot be maintained. This will include classrooms, corridors, offices and communal areas (including house spaces) except for when eating.

Face coverings are not required to be worn outside or for sport except for the lunch queue when face coverings should be worn. However, they must be worn when entering or leaving the School (including waiting for the School bus), as this involves large numbers of pupils in the same space.

The use of face coverings in specialist teaching spaces such as drama will be dependent on the ability to maintain a two metre social distance from other pupils and staff.

A record of pupils who have a medical exemption will be held by the Nurse Manager and a red lanyard will be provided to ensure staff are aware of this exemption. These pupils should be seated at the front of the class.

Safe wearing of face coverings

Safe wearing of face coverings requires the

- cleaning of hands before and after touching – including to remove or put them on.
- safe storage of them in individual, sealable, plastic bags between use.

Therefore when putting on or removing face coverings, pupils should:

- not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it.
- dispose of temporary face coverings in a waste bin (not recycling bin).
- place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them.
- wash hands or use hand sanitiser before continuing onto the next school activity.

If a pupil does not wear a face covering

If a pupil does not want to wear a face covering the School will:

- i) try and sit the pupil in the classroom two metres from all other pupils and staff
- ii) If it is not possible to place the pupil two metres from all other pupils and staff, the pupil will be sent to work in a space where this is possible (most often the library) and the pupil can access the lesson remotely.

This approach is to ensure all pupils and staff are protected

Additional points

Pupils should bring a spare face covering to school for use each day.

The Health Centre will carry a small contingency supply of face coverings for pupils who have forgotten to bring their own.

The choice of face covering should be made with comfort in mind, as well as safety, and this is a very personal choice. All colours and styles of covering will be permitted, with the exception of any with inappropriate slogans which will not be permitted.