

# REOPENING SEPTEMBER 2020- USE OF FACE COVERINGS

## INTRODUCTION

These protocols have been developed in response to the recommendations of City of York Council, which in turn are derived from World Health Organisation guidance.

## PRINCIPLES

There is emerging evidence that, if used properly, the use of face coverings can reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, particularly among adults and children over the age of 12.

At this time, the use of face coverings in the ways set out below is highly recommended at Millthorpe but is not mandatory for either students, staff or visitors.

Our position with regard to face coverings will be subject to regular review for the duration of the pandemic and may change in response to changes in government policy or guidance, changes to local or national infection rates or other new evidence and information.

## KEY EXPECTATIONS

1. The use of face coverings, such as masks, by students is strongly recommended whilst they move from one lesson to another.

*Rationale: at such times, students are more likely to mix with greater numbers of students, in particular students from other year groups. Whilst we have taken measures to reduce contact (such as one-way systems) the complex nature of the Millthorpe site limits the extent to which we can keep year group bubbles apart.*

2. The use of face coverings in all communal areas indoors, such as year group spaces and social areas is strongly recommended. Students should remove face coverings to eat and drink. In outdoor spaces face coverings are not necessary as long as social distancing is maintained.

*Rationale: students may mix with other students that are outside their class groups within their year group. Closer contact would be more difficult to trace should a confirmed case arise. Outside there is better ventilation and space to enable social distancing.*

3. There is no expectation that students will wear face coverings whilst in lessons but they will be free to do so if they wish. If they do choose to wear one in a lesson, they will be expected to wear it for the full lesson and not to remove it, fiddle with it etc (see below).

*Rationale: in lessons, students will be with their own half year group only (in KS3) and in smaller numbers, fully supervised and with furniture arranged to avoid students facing one another. The risk of transmission is therefore greatly reduced in this context, whilst the impact on communication and the risk of misuse of face coverings (which can lead to increased transmission risks) are increased.*

4. Staff will have the option to wear a clear visor at any time and the option to wear either a visor or an alternative face coverings when in communal spaces. Visors are preferred as they do not impede communication with students.

## PROTOCOLS FOR SAFE AND APPROPRIATE USE OF FACE COVERINGS

### 1. Suitability

Face coverings should meet the requirements as set out by the Government for use in other contexts, such as shops and public transport, i.e.

- Cover mouth and nose whilst allowing you to breathe comfortably
- Be secured to the head by ties or ear loops
- Be made of a material that you find to be comfortable and breathable, such as cotton
- Ideally include at least two layers of fabric (3 is recommended)
- If reusable, able to be washed with other laundry items (see below)

### 2. Washing

Reusable masks should be washed before coming to school each day.

### 3. Disposable Coverings

If disposable, they should only be worn once before being disposed of, so students should bring enough for each occasion they need to use one throughout the day. For this reason, disposable masks are not recommended for regular use.

### 4. Putting on masks

Before donning, hands should be thoroughly washed or sanitised. This will fit in with the

existing protocols for handwashing and sanitising between lessons.

## **5. Wearing**

Once in place, the mask should be left alone until it is removed.

In particular, students shouldn't touch or fiddle with masks, take them off and put them on again or wear them on the chin or neck.

## **6. Removal and Storage**

Before removing, hands should be washed thoroughly or sanitised. This will fit in with the existing protocols for handwashing and sanitising between lessons.

Students should only handle the ties or straps.

Disposable masks should be disposed of into a bin.

Reusable masks should be placed inside a sealable plastic bag.

Once removed, hands should be washed thoroughly or sanitised.

## **7. Sharing and Touching**

Students should never touch one another's masks, either when worn or when stored.

Students should never wear another student's mask, even if they believe it to be unworn.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Students who would normally be exempt from wearing a face covering for the reasons set out by the government legislation (e.g. health reasons) would not be expected to wear one in school. We will not ask students or parents to provide evidence of exemption.
2. As wearing a face covering is not mandatory, students who do not meet the government's exemption criteria but find wearing one difficult for other reasons can choose not to wear one. We will not ask students or parents to justify their decision not to wear a covering.
3. Students can choose to wear clear visors at any time during the school day, including lessons if they wish. Naturally, they would not then need to change into a mask between lessons but must observe the hygiene and usage rules set out above.
4. In line with government legislation, students must wear face coverings if they travel to school by public transport. Reusable coverings can then be used during the school day, subject to the above hygiene and usage rules.

5. Students may also choose to wear a mask for their journey to school even if they do not use public transport, for example if they travel with children who are from other households and other year groups. Again, reusable masks can be used during the school day subject to hygiene and usage rules.