

Thursday 26 August 2020

Dear Families,

Face Coverings at All Dixons Academies

Following the latest advice from the World Health Organisation (WHO), government guidance on the use of face coverings has changed. I am writing to inform you that we are making the wearing of coverings compulsory in all communal areas for all secondary students and all staff from Tuesday 1 September.

Primary Students

The Department for Education does *not* recommend the wearing of coverings for primary children because they may find it difficult to use them consistently and hygienically. The WHO does advise their use for over 6 year olds in areas of high infection, although with several control measures – for example, to ensure that the child can wear it safely. As such, if a parent chooses to send their child to the academy wearing one, this will be permitted, although we will have a conversation about the hygiene aspect if necessary (see below)

Secondary Students

Secondary students must wear face coverings in all large shared communal areas: corridors, when inside during break / lunchtime (other than when eating), and on any public transport to and from the academy. Students may choose to wear a disposable paper covering (although there are environmental issues with these) or a cloth cover (washable and re-useable). Face coverings must be plain coloured, and must not be scarves, balaclavas or bandanas: they must be suitable for a place of work.

The government does not advise students wear coverings in lessons, unless social distancing is compromised. If a student chooses to wear a face covering at all times, they must ensure that they keep it in place and are not putting it on and off because of the increased risk of infection. When not being worn, coverings must be kept in a small plastic bag and this can be kept in a pocket. The covering must not be left on any desk or table at any time.

It is the responsibility of the student and their family to come to the academy with a face covering and to ensure good hygiene routines in relation to it (see below). Where a student forgets their covering, this will be dealt with in the same way as any other uniform contravention.

Hygiene

Face coverings pose the same risk as tissues / cloth handkerchiefs, and not just for COVID-19. It is vital that students understand the importance of keeping their face cover away from others. Students must understand that incessant touching of the mask could lead to the passing on of more infection. Any touching of the mask should be followed by hand washing, which is the more effective, and / or the use of anti-bacterial gel.

Cloth covers must be washed every day. Alternatively, if a student cannot manage this, they must be kept in a small plastic bag for 72 hours and rotated with clean covers. If students are wearing disposable coverings, they must understand the importance of disposing them in a plastic bag and in a lidded bin. Paper coverings do tend to be dropped on the floor: nobody must touch anybody else's mask without wearing disposable gloves and then thoroughly washing their hands.

Finally

Face coverings are of course just one further way of preventing the spread of COVID-19. Hand washing, the hygienic disposal of tissues, and social distancing are even more important than ever as we all return to school.

Thank-you for your continued support. Attendance of those students on a staggered start so far has been excellent, and we all look forward to getting our students' education back on track next week.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Nick Weller
CEO

