



Head Teacher:
Martin Hill B.Sc. Hons, NPQH
Chester Road, Helsby,
Frodsham WA6 0HY
Tel: 01928 723 551
Email: head@helsbyhigh.org.uk
www.helsbyhigh.org.uk

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Dear Parent/Carer,

You will no doubt be aware that the rates of Covid transmission, both locally and nationally, have been rising over the first few weeks of this term. Although we constantly reflect on arrangements, the recent introduction of 'local lockdowns' in neighbouring Local Authorities, and the raising (from 3 to 4) of the national Covid alert level, have prompted a more thorough review of the ways in which we are operating. The purpose of this letter is to update you on some changes which will come into operation later this week.

Director of Public Health Letter

Attached is a letter from the local Director of Public Health, who has recommended the introduction of additional measures as described in the letter. They do need contextualising within our setting though and hence the following will apply in our school from the start of October (ie this Thursday) onwards:

- All visitors to the school of secondary age or above should wear a face-covering when visiting the Main Reception and then follow the rules for staff and students thereafter (see below).
- Parents/carers should not leave their car when dropping off or collecting children at the start or end of the school day. (The only exception to this would be to speak to a member of senior staff present on duty at the time.)
- Students should avoid congregating outside school, and mixing with other schools, and go directly home at the end of the school day.
- **All adults and students should wear face coverings in school corridors inside the building.**

Face Coverings

It is the final measure above which is likely to have the most impact on students. For simplicity it makes sense for it to apply to everybody in the building (ie staff, students and visitors) in the same way and for it to apply to all corridors. Face coverings do not need to be worn outside the school building and they should be removed once destinations have been reached. Please note that there has been no change to the government guidance that they should not be worn in classrooms.

In their tutor group time on Wednesday morning this week, students will have the introduction of this new requirement explained to them and will have the correct way to put on, remove and store face coverings explained to them. The following are all important points to note:

- Face coverings worn need to be appropriate (for example they should not be offensive in nature).
- Although government guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>) says that schools should assume that students have access to their own face coverings, there will be a supply of disposable face coverings available via Student Support Co-ordinators for students who have forgotten, misplaced or broken their own.
- In terms of student compliance, in effect face coverings will temporarily become part of our school uniform (and Sixth Form dress code) and not wearing them will be addressed in the same way as would non-compliance with any other aspect of school uniform.

I fully appreciate that for some students this may be the first time that they will have been required to wear face coverings and hence it may not be something that they initially feel completely comfortable doing. However, our students have consistently impressed us since the start of this term with their thoughtfulness and willingness to follow measures designed to keep each other safe and hence I am confident that they will approach the wearing of face coverings in the same mature manner.

The above website link can be used to access detail regarding exception from the wearing of face coverings in society, which we would also wish to apply within our school. Please contact the school if you feel that your child should be exempt from having to wear a face covering for any reason.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any further queries regarding any of the above. Thank you for all your support as we continue to endeavour to do everything we can to keep all members of our school community safe and also deliver the meaningful curriculum which our students require - neither of which is getting any easier as the national Covid-19 picture doesn't appear to be going in the direction we would have hoped as we returned to school at the start of this month.

Best wishes,

Martin Hill
Headteacher