

Dear Parent / Carer

### **Face Coverings for Secondary Pupils**

You will be aware that the Scottish Government now require, with effect from Monday 31 August, all pupils in Secondary schools to wear a face covering or mask. I am writing to provide some further clarification around what this means for our young people in Braes High School.

The government's scientific advisory group has been looking closely at this issue, particularly in light of the new World Health Organisation guidance, which was published last weekend and the new requirement is based on the latest scientific evidence. Scotland's Interim Chief Medical Officer, Dr Gregor Smith, has confirmed that the evidence suggests there is now a balance of worldwide data that shows in Secondary aged pupils face coverings have two main benefits, they:

- protect those around you if you are symptomatic or pre-symptomatic (in effect you may be spreading the disease without actually knowing it)
- might also reduce your chance of getting infection from other people from 'aerosol generation' (airborne spread of COVID-19).

The requirement to wear a face covering is designed to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in schools (thereby reducing the potential transmission within your family) and, importantly, to keep schools open. It is essential to note that this is an additional measure of protection and is not designed to replace the other measures that we already have in place. We will continue to operate our procedures around hand sanitisation, enhanced cleaning regimes, one way systems, staggered intervals/lunches and so on.

In line with the new guidance, we will require all pupils to wear a face covering:

- on school transport (including buses and taxis)
- in corridors and stairwells at all times
- in indoor social areas
- in toilets.

In addition, young people should of course comply with expectations around face coverings when in local shops too.

At the present time face coverings are not generally required to be worn in class. A very small number of young people will be exempt from wearing a face covering, and further details on that can be found [here](#). If you feel your young person cannot wear a face mask for any reason please discuss this with the relevant Pastoral Head in the first instance.

Over the next couple of days we will be working with our young people to explain to them why face coverings are required and also the "do's and don'ts" of their use. It would be helpful to us if you could reinforce these messages with your child and we think that this short video may help with that ([click here](#)).

Scottish Government guidance outlines to schools that it is reasonable to assume that most staff and young people will now have access to re-usable face coverings due to their increasing use in wider society. However, where anybody is having difficulty accessing a face covering: e.g. they have forgotten it or it has become soiled/unsafe, we will have a small supply available of face coverings to meet such needs. These can be accessed by pupils from the main school office.

We absolutely appreciate that all of this does not feel ‘normal’, however, we are all dependent on one another playing their part so that together we can help control the spread of COVID-19 and keep our school open. When one person doesn’t play their part, that may be all that it takes to go against this and so we look forward to counting on your support and all pupils (and staff) wearing a face covering, as described above, from the start of next week.

Yours sincerely,

Iain Livingstone