

The STAR Multi-Academy Trust – use of face coverings and masks:

DfE Guidance issued at the end of August recommends that face coverings are not necessary in primary schools, but that headteachers could require staff and visitors to wear them in areas where adult to adult social distancing cannot be maintained. The guidance states that in secondary schools there is the discretion to require face coverings in communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed, if the schools believe that it is right in their particular circumstances. Examples of where education leaders might decide to recommend the wearing of face coverings - for pupils and staff - in communal areas of a secondary education setting include:

- *where the layout of the school or college estate makes it particularly difficult to maintain social distancing when staff and pupils are moving around the premises*
- *where on top of hygiene measures and the system of controls recommended in the full opening guidance to schools and FE colleges and providers, permitting the use of face coverings for staff, pupils or other visitors would provide additional confidence to parents to support a full return of children to school or college*

The DfE advice is that in light of the mitigating measures education settings are taking, and the negative impact on communication, face coverings will not generally be necessary in the classroom even where social distancing is not possible.

Face coverings and masks for High School Students within the STAR MAT:

Our schools have risk assessed for re-opening and ensured social distancing is possible in the vast majority of situations. Therefore, as of 7th September 2020, the use of face-coverings within our secondary schools will be voluntary.

Despite social distancing arrangements being in place, we recognise that some students may wish to wear face coverings at secondary age, especially when moving around the school site and in communal areas. Therefore the STAR Multi-Academy Trust allows the wearing of face-coverings in its secondary schools and would support any student who would wish to wear a face covering in school as long as it is appropriate for school wear and covers only the nose and mouth. The individual school will remain the arbiter of what is an appropriate type of mask. Should the use of the face covering result in inappropriate behaviour or interactions with others, then permission for its use may need to be reviewed.

As with national guidance, we would discourage the use of face coverings within the classroom context, but students may keep them in place should they so wish.

This stance will be subject to frequent review alongside evolving national and local advice and appropriate communications issued should face coverings when moving around site need to be made mandatory (apart from for those exempt).

The Trust has available small supplies of face masks which can be passed to students where required.

Face coverings and masks for Primary School Students within the STAR MAT:

In concurrence with national and WHO guidance that face coverings should not be worn by children under 12 years, we do not recommend face coverings be used by our primary aged pupils. However, we recognise that some families may request for their child to wear face coverings or masks whilst on the school site. There may be a variety of background reasons for this for example underlying health conditions, anxiety, SEND (including OCD and ASD related infection anxiety). At all times, where a family make such a request, it will be taken seriously and a timely discussion with an appropriate member of staff facilitated. The discussion will be documented in a brief individual risk assessment, and if agreed that a face covering is appropriate, this will be permitted with immediate effect and reviewed at approximately monthly intervals.

Visitors to STAR MAT buildings:

In September 2020, school offices will, to all effect, be closed to visitors during the school day. However, it is recognised that some visits will be necessary, for example contractors, visiting professionals. All visitors to STAR MAT sites (including Trust Central employees) will be required to wear face coverings or masks (unless they are exempt from wearing one) as they enter school entrance areas to sign in and then to pass through communal spaces.

Parents and Carers on site:

It is recognised that drop-off and collection at some of our sites, whilst carefully planned, may be a point of risk for transmission for example 'school gates' in primary schools. To help protect the entire school community, parents and carers are asked to minimise the number of collecting adults. Alongside this, all adults bringing/collecting from the school site are encouraged to wear face coverings through points of flow.