

# Welcome Back Update

Dear Parent

I just wanted to send you a quick update now that we are in our first normal week of lessons after establishing our guidelines with all students last week.

For the large part we have been very pleased with the measures that are in place and with the way that students are adapting to the "new normal" (apologies – I hate this phrase too). Year 7 are settling in brilliantly and for all of our year groups it has been fantastic to feel the buzz of learning in our classrooms once more – this is exactly how it should be!

However, there are a couple of adaptations that we would like to make and your support is needed to ensure that they are implemented with immediate effect.

## Face Masks

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In my current guidance I have strongly recommended that students wear face masks when moving between lessons or other areas where they may have to queue outside the classroom environment.

We are changing this:

**\*\*\*\*\*All students must now wear a face covering when outside the classroom.\*\*\*\*\***

Why are we strengthening this guidance?

- We are already seeing in other schools that year groups are having to undertake 14 day quarantine sessions where students in their bubble have had positive Covid tests. The last thing that we, you or our students want is more time away from school, therefore, I believe that anything that we can do to reduce the chances of this happening should be done.
- A number of students are already wearing masks and others have expressed the desire to do so, but are influenced by peer pressure to keep them in their bags and not wear them.
- Students say that they feel safe around staff who wear a visor and/or a face mask when they have to come within 2 metres of students. Our students should also be able to feel safe around each other.
- All our Year groups are in bubbles, but there are times when travelling around the marked paths outside the school building that they pass parallel to each other. This does not class as either close contact or direct contact, but it is still better to have a face mask to protect others in case of a cough or a sneeze. It is apparent to staff, as we see pupils queuing to enter school or at lunchtimes, that despite being in their bubbles, they are so close in proximity that transmission of the virus within their bubbles will be all too easy.
- Many of you are relying upon grandparents as part of your childcare routines and we want to ensure that we minimise all risk to those who may be more vulnerable to the virus.

- There is no doubt that the use of masks reduces the impact of viral load in transmission if a student or a member of staff was to be positive with Covid.

There are many other reasons, but ultimately we have never stinted in our safeguarding responsibilities to your child and we want to do everything that is reasonable in reducing the risks to those in the Balshaw's community and their families.

#### **Users of Bus Services:**

If your child uses a bus to travel to school it is already the case that they **MUST** wear a face mask. We will be urging bus users to report to staff the names of any student using a bus without a face mask as their failure to follow the rules could lead to a significant portion of the school population to have to quarantine.

## **Hand Sanitiser**

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Despite clearly stating that having hand sanitiser is an essential part of the school uniform and equipment list, there are still a large number of students who do not have their own bottle of hand sanitiser.

**\*\*\*\*\*You must send your child to school with their own hand sanitiser every day\*\*\*\*\***

Hand sanitisation/hand washing is the single most important way to reduce the transmission of the virus after social distancing. We will be enforcing the following acronym with all of our students: **SBSA (Sub-Sar)**

**Sanitise Before**

**Sanitise After**

It doesn't matter what the activity – students should sanitise before and after:

- Eating
- Using the toilet
- Going into a different classroom
- Sitting at a different desk
- Going to break
- Going to lunch

Currently students are often waiting to be told to sanitise – they should always be thinking **SBSA** – Sanitise Before, Sanitise After. This needs to become an automatic process that happens without thinking.

## **Equipment Check**

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All tutors will be conducting an equipment check on Thursday morning. Please ensure that you have gone through the equipment list with your son/daughter ensuring in particular that they have a face covering and their own hand sanitiser.

## **Your support**

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I know that the vast majority of our parents will see this as a necessary and reassuring step. It is a vital way of us helping to ensure that, for as long as possible, we avoid any member of our community becoming Covid-positive.

Having hand sanitiser and wearing a mask each time you move outside the classroom is **NOT AN OPTION**. These are, for the time being, an essential part of the rules of Balshaw's. Whether or not you agree with it, these are the current rules and they are there for the safety of all. These rules will be in force with immediate effect.

We greatly appreciate your support with this. Having reviewed our procedures, this is a necessary next step to ensure that we can keep the school community safe. Please help us to help our students remain in school by reducing the risk of having to quarantine.

Kind regards

Mr Steven Haycocks

HEADTEACHER  
BALSHAW'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path. (Psalm 119, vs 105)