



Executive Headteacher: Mrs L. A. Gwinnett

Ref: 3132 LMA

14th May 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Covid-19 Update – May 2021

As you will be aware, on the 10th May 2021 the Department for Education updated the Covid-19 guidance for schools. Face coverings will no longer be recommended for secondary aged students in classrooms or communal areas in all schools. Whilst not reported widely in the media, the guidance does go on to state that where social distancing is not possible, there may be a need for adults to wear face coverings or in a local context, they may need to be considered and introduced.

Earlier in the week we gave you an update from one of our partners, Runshaw College about the outbreak at the college and the detection of the B.1.617.2 variant of concern (commonly known as the 'Indian variant' related to its origin), noted as being more transmissible. Thank you for all of your efforts to get your members of your household and especially the students at BPA tested to support this public health intervention.

At this point, our Year 11 students have two weeks left in school and this involves a series of assessments which will contribute to their Teacher Assessed Grades. Given everything that they have experienced over the last month in particular, we want to support and reassure them that as a school and community that we are doing everything that we can to make sure that they have an uninterrupted end to the term.

We appreciate that wearing masks, particularly in lessons, is not ideal and our students have responded well to this for the time it has been in place. All of us would like to see a time when this is no longer needed in school and right across society. Considering all of this and as a sensible precaution, we have agreed that in our school that **students and staff will continue to wear a face covering for the remainder of this term and on Monday 7th June**. This will be in both classrooms and around school in communal areas and inline with schools in the Trust and with some of our partners in the area. On the first day of the final half term (Monday 7.6.21), we will continue to wear a face covering. At this point, we will review the local situation and provide an update about the use of face coverings in school and this will be communicated to parents and students later on that day.

The Government's guidance goes on to say that, "Children and young people aged 11 and over **must still wear a face covering on public transport**. In accordance with advice from PHE, they **must also wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated transport to secondary school or college**. This does not apply to children and young people who are exempt from wearing face





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coverings." So, we must stress that the expectation of wearing a face covering does extend beyond the school gate to the point when the young person alights the bus – this is crucial to prevent transmission in the community.

In line with the guidance provided by the Government we will also maintain:

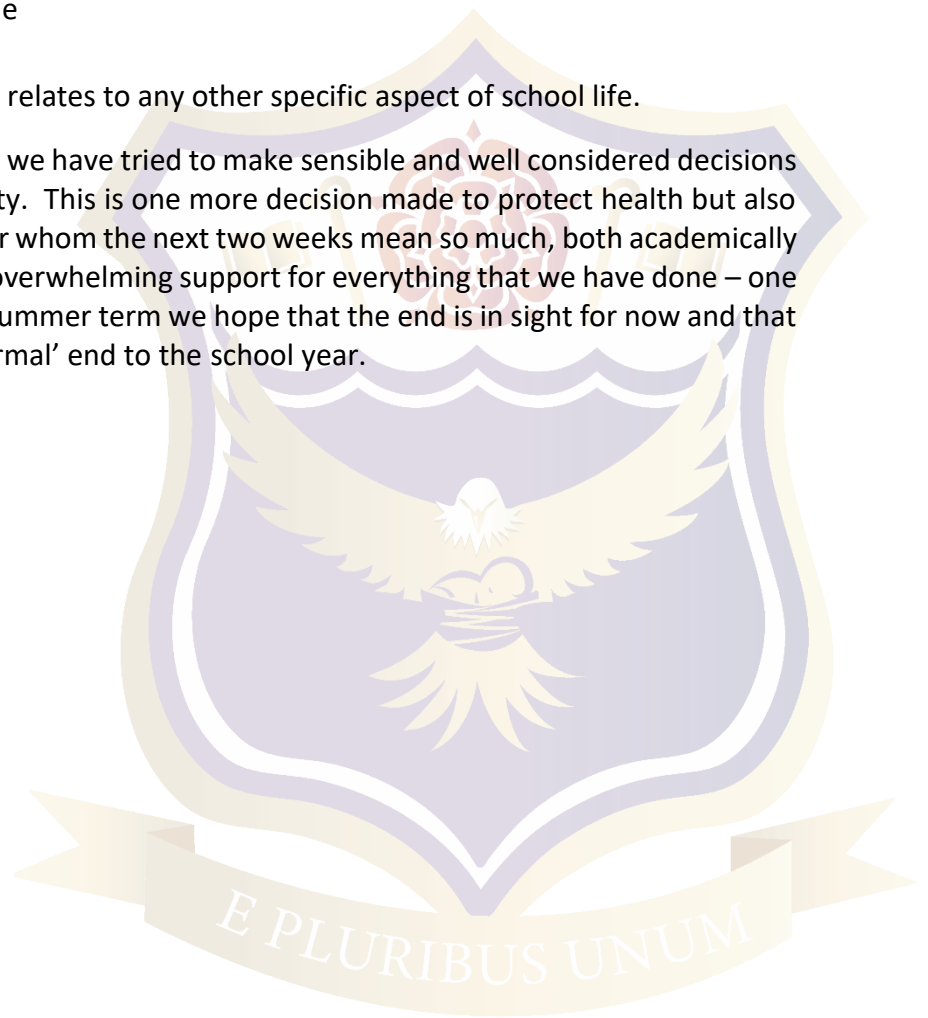
- year group bubbles
- the enhanced cleaning regime
- a staggered end to the day
- and follow the guidance that relates to any other specific aspect of school life.

Since the beginning of the pandemic we have tried to make sensible and well considered decisions in the best interest of our community. This is one more decision made to protect health but also to support the students in Year 11 for whom the next two weeks mean so much, both academically and otherwise. Thank you for your overwhelming support for everything that we have done – one further push. As we move into the summer term we hope that the end is in sight for now and that we can begin to plan for a more 'normal' end to the school year.

Yours faithfully,

L MacLaren

Mrs MacLaren
Head of School



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