



# SEATON VALLEY FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS

Elsdon Avenue, Seaton Delaval, Northumberland NE25 0BP

Tel: 0191 2371505 Fax: 0191 2376891

Email: [reception@svf.org.uk](mailto:reception@svf.org.uk)

[www.svf.org.uk](http://www.svf.org.uk)

**Chair of Governors:** Susan Dungworth

**Executive Headteacher:** John Barnes

18 September 2020

Dear parents/carers

As you will be aware from yesterday the North East had a series of restrictions placed upon it in order to try and control the spread of the Covid 19 virus. These restrictions will have an impact on our federation, the 3 schools, pupils and staff. On a more positive note, all of us can be very proud of how the majority of our young people have returned to school. They have done well and seem to be enjoying being back in school. Staff are also glad to be back working with our young people again and have been very impressed in how well they are doing.

One way we will be impacted is that some staff are going to be late into school and will have to leave early in order to pick their children up from school. Furthermore, some staff may not be in everyday due to childcare concerns. This is not what any of us want but it reflects the situation we are now in. As a federation, we do not plan for this to impact on the opening of the schools, as we will ensure that staff are in front of your child's classes. However, there will be times that your child does not have their normal teacher because of this. We do not expect there to be any impact on the quality of the education your child receives

**The other area that is going to be impacted is that from Monday 21st September 2020 any pupil in year 7 upwards and any member of staff will have to wear a face covering in communal spaces.**

As a Federation we have tried to avoid this happening and it has been a choice people were free to make. However, at a meeting I attended yesterday it was made very clear from the Northumberland Health and Safety team and Northumberland Public Health team that face coverings have to be worn. I therefore have to follow this instruction and as a result the face coverings will have to be worn. I have to be clear this is not because there is an issue in the federation, it is a county wide directive.

I know that you will have some questions about this so I will try and answer them now.

- If your child is in year 5 and 6 they do not have to wear a face covering. However if you wish for them to wear a covering that is fine but the advice to us is that they do not need to.
- No one will have to wear a face covering in lessons but staff may wear visors.
- Any child in year 7 to year 13 must wear a face covering in communal areas.
- A communal area is anywhere that is not a classroom when a lesson is going on.
- A face covering will have to be worn outside if it is a communal area. I realise that this may be contentious but we will review this on a weekly basis and take advice from Health and Safety.
- At lunchtime and break if your child is not eating or drinking the face covering must be worn.
- As a federation we would like people to wear either disposable face masks or reusable face masks. We do not want people to wear things which are pulled up, scarves or such like. I realise that people may want to wear these types of face covering, but for the initial period we are going for a face mask style of face covering.
- With regard to the face masks and patterns we would like these to be plain or if they do have a pattern on for that pattern to be subtle. As with our normal school uniform rules, the face masks should not be offensive or have any racist or drug influenced design. If the staff feel that the design of the face mask is inappropriate the pupils will be expected to remove the face mask and they will be given a disposable one to wear. The schools reserve the right to make this decision and any non compliance will be dealt with following our normal behaviour practices. I hope and expect that this will not be an issue.
- I understand that there may be some pupils for whom the wearing of a face mask will be an issue due to medical issues. If this applies to your child please contact your head of year or student progress leader and discuss this matter with them so we can work to find an appropriate solution.
- Face masks must be worn on school and public transport. It is very important that you reinforce this with your child.

- If your child walks to school with a group of friends, we suggest that they wear the face masks, but that is their choice.

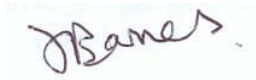
I hope and expect that the majority of pupils and staff will be in face masks by Monday and I am grateful for your support in this matter. As I say, we are following the instructions from the Local Authority. Please refer to the attached SVF reference sheet, Safe Removal of Facemasks.

I have no doubt that further issues will arise from these new restrictions and when they do we will respond to them as best we can to ensure that your children are as safe as possible whilst still getting the best education possible. I will keep you updated with any further information when it comes into us.

I have no doubt that all of us associated with this federation will adapt and respond positively to these new restrictions in the same way that we have done for all the rest of the pandemic.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the schools, attached is a quick reference guide for parents/carers regarding COVID-19 student absence. I wish you all a good weekend and look forward to seeing everyone on Monday, and all those pupils who should be wearing a face mask to be wearing one.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JBarnes', with a small flourish at the end.

John Barnes  
Executive Headteacher

