



SEATON VALLEY FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS

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Dear parent/carer

4 January 2022

May I take this opportunity to wish you a happy new year and I hope that you had a good holiday? As you will be aware the Department for Education has announced that from tomorrow, Wednesday 5 January, all pupils in years 7 to 13 will be expected to wear masks in lessons. This goes alongside the expectation to wear masks in corridors and communal areas.

Therefore, it is expected that pupils in all 3 schools who are year 7 and above will wear masks in communal areas and in lessons. I would be grateful if you could reinforce this with your children. If your child is unable to do this please let their school know and the reason for this.

Like everyone, I would far rather our young people did not have to wear face coverings and I hope that this decision is ended as quickly as possible. However, whilst the Omicron variant is so prevalent it is what we will be asking our young people to do.

We will also ask all our young people to sanitise as often as possible and also follow the "hands, space, face" message and guidance.

Another measure we will be taking is ensuring good ventilation by having windows and doors open. It is typical that when we have to do this the weather takes a turn and becomes cold. Therefore, pupils will be allowed to wear coats if the classrooms are cold. I must be clear the heating is on, but the need for windows to be open makes some rooms cold.

The senior leadership team is committed to do all we can to keep all the pupils in school, but it may be that some adaptations have to be made if we have high staff absence. However, this will be a final resort and should we need to take this decision to educate some year groups at home, you will be told in advance and a clear explanation will be given as to why those pupils are being sent home. I must also raise with you that should the kitchen teams be affected by staff absence we may only be able to provide a restricted menu. Again we have no plans to do that at the moment, but I just want to warn you that we may have to go to this measure.

I think it is safe to say that we are all awaiting the next few days and weeks with some anticipation as we see exactly what impact the latest surge of Omicron has on us.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that testing helps with the control of covid and that your child should be testing twice a week. If you have run out of lateral flow tests please let your school know and we can provide you with some more.

I, like all my staff, are hoping that we will soon be able to return to some form of normality where masks are not needed and school can be like it used to be. But until then we welcome your support as we do all we can to keep our schools safe, whilst providing the best education for our young people that we can.

I hope you all have a very good and happy new year and would like to thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

John Barnes
Executive Headteacher