



14th May 2021

Dear Parent,

COVID Update – Face Masks

I would like to start this letter by thanking all of our school community for the sensible, responsible and mature way they have approached the changes to our school day timetable this week. Tarleton is beginning to feel more 'normal' and we are looking forward to reducing more of the COVID restrictions that have been put in place for the safety of all in the coming weeks.

As you will be aware, on the 10th May 2021 the Department for Education updated the Covid-19 guidance for schools. Included within the guidance it states that face coverings will no longer be a compulsory recommendation 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 the wearing of face coverings and there is an expectation that we will take the local situation into account.

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 (commonly known as the 'Indian Variant' related to its origin), which is noted as being more transmissible. Thank you for all of your efforts to get your household members and especially the students at Tarleton Academy tested to support the public health programme for Runshaw and the community it serves.

Year 11 students have two weeks left in school and this involves a series of assessments in school which will contribute to their Teacher Assessed Grades. At this point, and 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 we are doing everything that we can to make sure that they have an undisrupted final term.

We appreciate that wearing masks, particularly in lessons, is not ideal and our students have responded well to this throughout 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 society. Considering all of this and as a sensible precaution, we have agreed that in our school, those across the Trust and in line with some schools across West Lancashire and South Ribble, **students and staff will continue to wear a face covering for the remainder of this term and on Monday 7 June**. This will be in classrooms and around school in communal inside areas. On the first day of the final half term (Monday 7.6.21), we will also all wear a face covering. At this point, we will review the local situation and provide an update for you about face coverings in school. This will be communicated to parents and students later on that day.

Outstanding education at the heart of the community

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 coverings". So, we must stress 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.

We hope that you will agree that we have, since the beginning of the pandemic, 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, 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 now in sight.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Victoria Hill', written in a cursive style.

Mrs Victoria Hill
Headteacher