



St. Joseph's RC High School

Ysgol Uwchradd Gatholig Joseff Sant

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Headteacher/Pennaeth: Mrs J Jarrett BA(Hons) M.A NPQH

10 September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Update on COVID-19 control measures

Yesterday, I was very disappointed to have to share with you the news regarding a confirmed case of COVID-19 in our school community. I understand that this will have caused a great deal of upset and inconvenience, particularly as all year groups have made such a positive start to the academic year. We have been really impressed with the way pupils have been working with staff to follow the measures that we have put in place to keep our school environment as safe as possible.

I want to reassure you that we have undertaken a comprehensive assessment of risks and introduced clear control measures specifically associated with COVID-19 to lower the risk of transmission. The measures that we have put in place are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary. As part of this review process, last Monday, the Health and Safety Manager from Newport City Council visited school and confirmed that the measures we have in place are robust and adhere to Welsh Government guidance.

I would like to remind you of key messages we all need to remember:

Be vigilant and communicate

Please continue to be vigilant and if your child displays any symptoms of COVID-19, keep them at home and contact school. Symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a new or continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of or change to sense of smell or taste

Travel to and from school on public or school transport

As you are already aware, there are very strict guidelines for pupils who are travelling to and from school on public or school transport and all pupils must follow these guidelines:

- all pupils must wear face coverings when travelling on public or school transport
- windows in buses must be left open at all times
- where possible, pupils should try to sit with members of their own year group on the bus, with Years 7, 8 and 9 downstairs and Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 upstairs
- all pupils must be seated on the bus at all times
- all pupils must sit facing forward in the bus

Use of face coverings in school

You will already be aware that face coverings must be worn by Year 12 and Year 13 pupils who are taught in a school we are collaborating with or if they have a collaborative pupil in their St Joseph's RC High School lesson.

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I have also notified you that Newport City Council has taken the decision to recommend the use of face coverings for pupils in communal areas of secondary schools where social distancing cannot be maintained over prolonged periods of time.

A communal area is an area where individuals are mixing with pupils outside their contact group (year group).

In school, the communal areas, where individuals could potentially mix with pupils outside their contact group (year group), are:

- when they enter and exit school site
- when they are accessing the toilet
- when they are travelling to a specialist teaching room
- when Year 12 and Year 13 pupils who are taught in a school we are collaborating with or if they have a collaborative pupil in their St Joseph's RC High School lesson

As a result of our review of operational procedures, we are adding the following extra measures:

- pupils must wear a face covering as soon as they enter the school site and until they enter their year group's zone
- at the end of the school day, all pupils will need to wear a face covering until they leave the school site
- pupils must wear a face covering when they are accessing the toilet
- pupils must wear a face covering when they are travelling to a specialist teaching room

Please be aware that this will not apply to those pupils who have been advised not to wear a face covering because of a medical reason. In this case, I would ask that you contact your child's Head of Year in writing to confirm this.

Safe use of face coverings

We are regularly talking to all pupils and staff about the most important controls to prevent infection including the importance of robust hand and respiratory hygiene. We are also speaking to pupils and staff about safe practice with face coverings and would be grateful if you would speak with your child and reinforce the following points:

1. A face covering should:

- cover your nose and mouth while allowing you to breathe comfortably
- fit comfortably but securely against the side of the face
- be secured to the head with ties or ear loops
- be made of a material that you find to be comfortable and breathable, such as cotton
- ideally include at least two layers of fabric (the World Health Organisation recommends three depending on the fabric used)
- unless disposable, be able to be washed with other items of laundry according to fabric washing instructions and dried without causing the face covering to be damaged.

2. When wearing a face covering you should:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on
- avoid wearing on your neck or forehead
- avoid touching the part of the face covering in contact with your mouth and nose, as it could be contaminated with the virus
- change the face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
- avoid taking it off and putting it back on a lot in quick succession.

3. When removing a face covering:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before removing
- only handle the straps, ties or clips
- do not give it to someone else to use

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- if single-use, dispose of it carefully in a waste bin and do not recycle
- if reusable, wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions at the highest temperature appropriate for the fabric
- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser once removed
- once removed, store reusable face coverings in a sealable plastic bag until you have an opportunity to wash them
- if the face covering is single use, dispose of it in a bin. Do not put it in a recycling bin

It is vital that everyone who wears a face covering has a clear understanding of the safe and correct wearing, removal, storage and disposal of protective face coverings, and that all are clear that face coverings do not provide protection to the individual - they protect others from themselves.

Please be assured, I fully recognise and accept that some pupils may feel more comfortable wearing a face-covering in all areas of school. As a school, we respect the right of all members of our community to feel safe and secure at school and they will not be challenged if they make this choice.

Parents/carers on school site

Parents/carers are only permitted on site to drop off or collect their child from school and must remain in their vehicle at all times. If you need to speak to a member of staff, please phone or email school and your request will be passed to the appropriate person.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding during this difficult time. I will keep updating you regarding any changes to the control measures we have put in place.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jarrett
Headteacher

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