



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

2 September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Face coverings

As you are already aware, pupils are expected to wear a face covering while travelling on public or school transport. In addition to this requirement, following the recent change to Welsh Government advice relating to the use of face-coverings, Newport City Council has taken a 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.

This will not mean that every secondary school in the city will automatically adopt the use of face coverings. This will be determined on a school by school basis.

St Joseph's RC High School, like each school in Newport, has completed a COVID 19 School Risk Assessment which should be based upon the principal of minimising the amount of time that pupils are required to be outside of their contact groups. Where a school is able to minimise the need for pupils to be in a communal area for a prolonged amount of time, use of face masks are not required. This is generally achieved through, for example, maintaining the use of one classroom or staggering class changeovers, break times and lunch times.

We have undertaken a comprehensive assessment of risks and introduced clear control measures specifically associated with COVID-19 to lower the risk of transmission. As part of our revised operational measures, I emailed you last week with specific information regarding pupils being predominantly located in a designated space with staggered break and lunch times. As a result, there will be a significantly reduced number of pupils moving around the school site at any one time. There are also a significant number of fixed hand sanitiser units in place which are designed to support strong levels of hygiene.

Newport secondary schools will also be provided with Health and Safety expert advice and support to consider if face coverings for pupils are required in each of their schools when, next week, all pupils return on a full-time basis.

Please be assured, I fully recognise and accept that some pupils and/or staff may feel more comfortable wearing a face-covering. As with the initial phase of increased operations, where a pupil and/or member of staff wishes to wear a face covering then the school will permit this. As a school, we respect the right of all members of our community to feel safe and secure at school.

However, 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.

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We will be 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 will also be speaking to pupils and staff about safe practice with face coverings. This will include:

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
- If single-use, dispose of it carefully in a residual 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.

Please do not hesitate to email us at sjhs@newport.gov.uk if you have concerns about the return to school and be assured that we will continuously review our plans in line with government guidelines.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Jarrett
Headteacher

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