# Tuesday 1st September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

**Information about Face Coverings**

As you will be aware the government changed its position on face coverings in secondary schools with updated [guidance](https://ascl.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=dae6fbf66d6135a8a21b3627d&id=0c338103ba&e=739e649b9d) published earlier this week. The key points are as follows:

* For schools and colleges in most circumstances (i.e. not subject to local restrictions/lockdowns) the government is still not recommending face coverings as necessary in education settings.
* However, schools and colleges have the discretion to require face coverings for pupils and staff in communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed, if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances.
* The use of face coverings in the classroom should still be avoided because they “can have a negative impact on learning and teaching”.
* For schools and colleges in areas where local restrictions apply, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain.
* As in the general approach, it will still “not usually be necessary” to wear face coverings in the classroom.
* Further guidance on face coverings for areas where local restrictions apply will be issued and will come into effect on 1 September.
* Staff and pupils will be expected to buy or make their own face coverings. Schools and colleges will be expected to have a “small contingency supply” available to supplement this.
* The [exemptions](https://ascl.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=dae6fbf66d6135a8a21b3627d&id=7c5277f6a5&e=739e649b9d) to wearing face coverings which apply more broadly will also apply in education settings.

The document makes it clear that “this is guidance, not mandatory activity”.

Our local area, as you will be aware, has a very low rate of COVID-19 infection and transmission and we have taken a number of precautions to keep everyone safe which have been outlined in previous letters which can be found on the home page of the College website. Therefore in line with the above guidance, face coverings will not be mandatory in any area of the College.

However, I do recognise that some students will feel more confident and comfortable when wearing a face covering and therefore if they choose to do so in communal areas and corridors then I support them to do this.

We will ask students to remove their face covering when they come into the classroom, after they have taken their seat. When putting on or taking off a face covering students should wash or sanitise their hands before and after doing so and only touch the covering by the ear loops or strings.

Please note that if your child chooses to wear a face covering then it should be stored in a sealed plastic bag in their bag and should be a fresh covering each day. Masks should be plain or patterned in appearance but should not show any motifs, slogans or images which are not appropriate. They should not be worn on the neck or chin. If a student is using a face covering inappropriately then they will be asked to remove it. We will be providing a video for all students to watch (which will also be available on the website) to ensure that students are aware how to both wear a face covering correctly and remove it in the safest way.

There may be instances within some practical lessons where students may be asked to wear a face covering or visor, for example GCSE Drama. If this is the case then students may be provided with a clean face covering to wear if they do not have their own.

I will continue to update you further should Government or local guidance change.

A reminder that there is lots of information for students and parents on the College website including copies of all letters that have been sent to parents with information about returning to the College, uniform lists, equipment lists, PE lesson information and kit requirements, school day timings, the one way route, new non-negotiables and the Sidmouth College Way, as well as information on how to support your child to return to school after lockdown.

Thank you for your continued support over this challenging time. The staff at Sidmouth College are looking forward to welcoming all our students back next week.

Yours faithfully



Mrs S Parsons

Principal