

15 September 2020

Dear Parents/carers

### **Covid-19 update**

I thought it would be helpful to provide an update on Covid-19 with regards to education and children. Please take five minutes to read this.

Firstly, thank you for sending your child to school with a face mask. This is greatly appreciated. **Students must wear a face mask when inside the buildings (except for classrooms) so it is imperative they have at least one mask with them.** We encourage them to have a spare mask, in case one gets lost, damaged or forgotten. Today, for example, around 30 students forgot their mask and we had to provide them with one and as I am sure you will appreciate this has taken up valuable time dealing with these forgotten masks.

With effect from Monday 21 September 2020 if masks are issued to students who have forgotten theirs, we will be making a charge of £1.00 per mask. This cost will be added to your Wisepay account.

Below are two recent articles of research that may provide us all with some idea of direction of travel.

### **Masks**

First is an article in the Journal of General Internal Medicine titled '*Masks do more than protect others during COVID-19: Reducing the inoculum of SARS-CoV-2*'. This article unravels how wearing masks reduce the viral dose for the wearer, leading to more mild and asymptomatic infection.

<https://ucsf.app.box.com/s/blvolkp5z0mydzd82rjks4wyleagt036>

It goes on to suggest that wide-spread wearing of masks could lead to greater community-level immunity and slower spread whilst we wait for a vaccine. This is one reason why we are now insisting that all students wear masks in areas of the school that are inside or of high population density. Please respect this.

### **Symptoms in children**

The second article is from the COVID symptom study being run by King's College London and the NHS. With over 4 million members of the public now using the App, some significant findings are emerging. Details of the App can be accessed via the website link below:

<https://covid.joinzoe.com/>

I thought I would focus on the aspect of symptoms in children.

According to research from the COVID Symptom Study App over half (52%) of children school aged children (those under the age of 18) who tested positive for COVID don't log any 'adult' classic symptoms (cough, fever, anosmia) in the week before and after the test. In

addition, a third (33%) of children who tested positive for COVID never logged any of the 20 symptoms listed in the App suggesting many children are asymptomatic.

It is important that parents and teachers are aware of all the symptoms that children might present with to make the right decision when it comes to sending them back to the classroom. The research highlighted that children display a different range of symptoms compared to the overall adult population. The top five symptoms in school aged children who test positive for COVID are; fatigue (55%) headache (53%), fever (49%), sore throat (38%) and loss of appetite (35%). This was different compared to the App's data on adults; fatigue (87%), headache (72%), loss of smell (60%), persistent cough (54%) and sore throat (49%). In addition to this, research from the App has also found that one in six (15%) children who test positive for COVID also present with an unusual skin rash.

Tim Spector, Professor of Genetic Epidemiology at King's College London, comments: "Getting children back to school and keeping them in school is a priority, so it is essential that we understand how COVID-19 affects children and highlight the potential differences. Knowing that children present less often with respiratory symptoms and are more likely to be suffering from headaches, fatigue and skin rashes, will help parents make the right decisions to keep them at home until they feel better. This is a stressful time for all and if as many parents log for their children as possible we will have a much clearer picture of COVID within local schools across the UK allowing us to keep schools open and children learning!"

So, I hope the above two articles are of help to you in understanding how we, as a school, are operating.

Please make sure your child always has a hygienic mask with them every day, and if you notice any of the symptoms mentioned above then our advice is to keep them at home that morning and to contact the school and PHE as appropriate. We need to keep the school as clean as it is possible to achieve and your help in this is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely



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Headteacher