

14 May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Following the Government's announcement on Monday regarding the further easing of lockdown restrictions we felt it pertinent to contact you summarising how these changes may affect your child at Ridgeway Academy.

Face coverings for all students in the school will be optional from Monday 17 May 2021. The updated guidance from the Department for Education states that face coverings are no longer recommended in classrooms. However, we are aware that for many within our community there are still feelings of anxiety and your child may wish to continue to protect, as far as possible, close family and friends who may be vulnerable. To that end, if your child wishes to continue wearing a face covering in our corridors/communal areas or in the classroom they will be permitted to do so. We strongly advocate the continued use of face coverings within corridors, Osborn and Attimore Hall. It continues to be a protective measure, highlighted by incidences where students have tested positive in lateral flow and require a PCR test.

In line with the updated guidance, please note that school staff will be required to wear face coverings when travelling within our school buildings. Like our students, our staff will be given the option to continue to wear their face coverings in classrooms should they wish.

Face coverings continue to be mandatory on school transport. Therefore, your child will need to continue to wear a face covering on all school bus journeys.

All face covering guidance is subject to local conditions and context. Should there be a local outbreak or an outbreak within the school we may be directed by Public-Health England to reinstate a face covering control measure once again. Therefore, we urge all parents and students to continue to have a supply of face coverings at home and please discuss with your child that these could be worn in classrooms/corridors at some point in the near future.

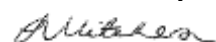
We urge you to continue with a programme of lateral flow testing at home and ask that you record the results via the school's website. It is best practice to test your child before they come to school on Sunday evening/Monday morning and Thursday morning. Should you need to order additional rapid lateral flow tests you can do so by clicking the link [here](#).

Despite face coverings no longer being compulsory in school, we still have a number of control measures on site to reduce the potential risk of the virus spreading. In classrooms, windows will remain open, as well as classroom doors where possible. Students will need to continue with a regime of hand washing or sanitising when entering and leaving our site, and our staff will continue to adhere to social distancing. Our year group bubbles remain in place, including separate canteen, bathroom and classroom arrangements.

Whilst we appreciate the excitement that accompanies the loosening of lockdown restrictions, we urge all in the community to continue to be safe to help play our part in ensuring we minimise the risk of an increase in positive cases.

In the meantime, we hope many of you are able to enjoy seeing friends and family and begin to engage in activities that support your health and mental well-being.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Mitcherson
Headteacher