

28th January 2022

Dear parents and carers

Face coverings - an update

As promised last week, I am writing to update you on our weekly review of the school's position on face coverings.

It will come as no surprise to parents that the slight decline in infection rates after the Christmas break has reversed - and reversed sharply. Public Health England figures for 26 January indicate that the infection rate in Malvern Hills has risen from 634 per 100,000 last week to 798 this week. This headline figure conceals the fact that the infection rate for children aged 10-14 has risen to 1,807 per 100,000. The figure for the same age group in Worcester City is even higher at 3,064.

Although the situation remains under control at Hanley Castle, we are feeling the impact of this rise. The number of students currently at home with Covid has risen again from last week's peak. In addition, six members of staff are now confirmed cases.

Our priority remains to keep as many students and staff well and in school as possible, particularly our Year 11 and Year 13 exam groups who are working so hard to prepare for their exams.

The government's guidance continues to recommend masks in congested areas, and gives schools the flexibility to make their own decisions on what is in the best interests of students. **We are therefore again asking students to remain masked during and between lessons for the next week, at which point we will review the situation again.**

In addition, **it is imperative that all students continue to test twice weekly at home. Children must not come to school if they test positive or are unwell in any way.**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our parents, students and other members of the school community for your support with our current approach to the pandemic. I have spoken to a number of parents and consulted with a very many students this week. It is so heartening to see just how much common sense and patience exists after almost two years' of sustained challenge.

Road traffic safety

Sadly an accident occurred on the main road outside school last week. A student was knocked down and sustained injuries which required hospital treatment. In response to this we commissioned an external health and safety advisor to review our drop-off and pick-up arrangements. As a result, I would like to remind all parents of the following arrangements which have been put in place in order to ensure that your children are not endangered at the beginning and end of the school day:

- Where possible, students should cycle, walk or travel to school by bus
- If it is essential to drop off and pick up your child by car, **you must use the temporary road and ensure that your child exits and enters your car at the bottom of this road**, opposite the tennis courts
- Only drop off in the bus bay if directed to do so by a member of staff
- **Drop off should be before 8.30 am and pick up not before 3.30 pm**
- A small number of passes have been issued giving access to the Aspire car park - no other cars should enter Church End or the school site
- **Children must not be dropped off or picked up from anywhere else - certainly not the main road, Church End or Quay Lane**

Thank you again for working with the school on both of these issues. There is nothing more important to us than keeping your children safe.

With my very best wishes

Lindsey Cooke