

29 November 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

**Re: A return to face masks from tomorrow, Tuesday 30th November 2021.**

Following the Prime Minister's briefing on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November and the temporary measures that he has initiated in response to the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in the UK, schools have been told that **all pupils should wear masks in school.**

We have been told that this is a precaution to slow the spread of any variant whilst they gather additional information. To be clear, this is a national measure and Lees Brook's case numbers have dropped considerably and have remained low since the half term holiday.

**Face Masks: two things that you need to know:**

1. Face coverings should be worn in communal areas in all settings by staff, visitors and pupils or students in year 7 and above, unless they are exempt. This excludes classrooms but should a child wish to wear one there they can, though it will *not be mandatory*.
2. Pupils or students (in year 7 or above) should continue to wear face coverings on public and dedicated school transport, unless they are exempt.

**Testing:**

We of course encourage you as a family to undertake regular lateral flow testing at home, twice a week. We always have these in school so if you need more, please contact school and let us know.

On Friday afternoon, the government has also indicated that there will be more testing when children return to schools in January. We have no further information on this but will update you nearer the time.

**Other key information:**

The current guidance on isolation remains the same. We have not returned to the close contact system that we had last year, so only those confirmed or suspected by PHE as close contacts of the Omicron virus will be told to isolate. They will tell you this if it is the case.

**Vaccinations:**

The Dfe are still encouraging all students aged 12 and over to take up the offer of the vaccine, including boosters. Vaccination makes people less likely to catch the virus and less likely to pass it on. Should parents choose this for their children then they can arrange it via this link:

To book a vaccination, please visit: [Book or manage a coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccination – NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk).

In addition, we are not returning to bubbles or different entrances at this point and hopefully not at any point. For now, the day will look as normal in times, entrances, timetables and movement around the building but students and staff will wear masks on public transport, as they travel to and from school and in corridors. Please also remind your child about the importance of regular handwashing as always and social distancing expectations.

We would recommend that students have an adequate supply of facemasks for the coming weeks. I would advise they have one for coming in on public transport, a different one for wearing in school and at least one spare in case the facemask gets wet or damaged. We have bought a large supply of single-use facemasks to ensure all students have access to them, but ask that you provide an adequate supply for your child as far as possible. Please ask if you need support with this so that we can help.

**There are some exceptions to this.**

- Some students will have medical exemptions, and we have shared this list of names with staff. If any parents/carer wish to add their child to this list please get in touch – especially our new Year 7 pupils, it should not simply be a preference but a genuine medical reason
- When eating in the dining hall
- When participating in physical exercise
- When outside at break or time.

Finally, we hope that this period of the wearing of facemasks will be brief but I will obviously continue to follow government guidance.

Thank you as always for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,



Zoe House  
Principal, Lees Brook Community School