

The STAR Multi-Academy Trust
Use of face coverings – updated February 2021

DfE Guidance issued on 22nd February 2021 with regard the wearing of face covering on school site has now changed.

For secondary schools:

Where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving about the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Face coverings do not need to be worn by pupils when outdoors on the premises.

In addition we now also recommend in those schools, that face coverings should be worn in classrooms or during activities unless social distancing can be maintained. This does not apply in situations where a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity for example in PE lessons.

For primary schools:

In primary schools, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and adult visitors in situations where social distancing between adults is not possible (for example when moving around in corridors and communal areas). Children in primary school do not need to wear a face covering.

Face coverings and masks within the STAR MAT – updated position as of 1st March 2021:

Our Trust sites have had a Face Coverings Policy in place since late September 2020. We thank our students, staff and parental community for their continued support in adhering to this policy and helping to safeguard everyone involved.

The changes to DfE Policy will therefore add one additional measure in that secondary staff and students in our schools will now be strongly encouraged to wear face coverings within the classrooms as an additional precautionary measure at least until Easter, when the measure will be reviewed by the DfE. The local school team will remain the arbiter of what is deemed an acceptable face covering and will work with your child to ensure they understand the rules with regard where they may be removed, safe disposal and so on. As this is now strongly encouraged, it is absolutely vital that families work closely with their child's school if they consider their child exempt or that wearing a face covering will cause welfare issues which outweigh the need for heightened safety precautions at this time. Our Trust staff will of course be sensitive to the fact that especially initially, this change may cause additional anxiety for some of our students and again, we welcome communication with our families should this be the case. For those young people who rely on facial expression and lip reading for their communication, we will of course make bespoke allowances and adjust our teaching techniques accordingly.

Our Trust policy remains that face-coverings should be worn by adults in all communal areas as identified by the individual school. This applies to staff and visitors, apart from those who are exempt.

In concurrence with national and WHO guidance that face coverings should not be worn by children under 12 years, we do not recommend face coverings be used by our primary aged pupils. However, we recognise that some families may request for their child to wear face coverings whilst on the school site. There may be a variety of background reasons for this for example underlying health conditions, anxiety, SEND (including OCD and ASD related infection anxiety). At all times, where a family make such a request, it will be taken seriously and a timely discussion with an appropriate member of staff facilitated. The discussion will be documented in a brief individual risk assessment, and if agreed that a face covering is appropriate, this will be permitted with immediate effect and reviewed at approximately monthly intervals.

Visitors to STAR MAT buildings:

School offices will, to all effect, remain closed to visitors during the school day. However, it is recognised that some visits will be necessary, for example contractors, visiting professionals. All visitors to STAR MAT sites (including Trust Central employees) will be required to wear face coverings (unless they are exempt from wearing one) as they enter school entrance areas to sign in and then to pass through communal spaces. Under express permission of the Headteacher, certain visitors may be allowed to remove face coverings once social distancing measures are in place.

Parents and Carers on site:

It is recognised that drop-off and collection at some of our sites, whilst carefully planned, may be a point of risk for transmission for example 'school gates' in primary schools. To help protect the entire school community, parents and carers are asked to minimise the number of collecting adults. Alongside this, all adults bringing/collecting from the school site are required to wear face coverings through points of flow unless exempt.

CEO: Ian Yapp B.Sc. (Hons)

The STAR Multi-Academy Trust, Rose Cottage, Toulston, Tadcaster, North Yorkshire, LS24 9NB

Tel: (01937) 538538 ; www.starmat.uk ; e: CEO@starmat.uk