



HECKMONDWIKE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

PDR/SMF

22 September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I do hope this letter finds you and your family well and the start to the academic year has gone well at your end.

I am writing to you today to communicate our increased concern with respect to covid in school. Since the start of term we have seen a steady rise in infection rates across students and indeed staff. However, to be absolutely honest and candid, we are not surprised by this, as the complete relaxation of covid protocols in wider society and in schools was always likely to result in this. We are very hopeful that students will take up the offer of being vaccinated and we will communicate plans to you of how this will be done when we are told them in due course. With the vast majority of the school then being vaccinated and transmissibility so reduced, we hope we will see infection rates start to fall. However, this is likely to be some months away before we get to this stage. Therefore, regrettably, but necessary, we will be asking all students, unless they are medically exempt, to wear face coverings in indoor, large communal gatherings such as assemblies, corridors and lunch queues with immediate effect from tomorrow. We have witnessed huge educational and social benefits of not wearing face coverings in lessons, where communication is our core business, so at this stage we will not be invoking this rule in lessons, though it is something we are monitoring very carefully and may do in the near future.

Along a similar vein, we would respectfully ask parents and carers when they come in to school for one of the forthcoming year based information evenings to similarly wear face coverings.

Whilst, we are disappointed to feel the need to invoke this stance so early in the year, as I said earlier in this letter, it is not a surprise. The key issue is that we keep students and staff in school and avoid at all costs remote learning unless it is absolutely necessary and our experience of using face coverings suggests it is likely to have an impact.

I would also like to take this opportunity of reiterating the importance of twice weekly testing using lateral flow tests both for students and other family members. If there is any doubt about symptoms please contact the school for advice and play safe by keeping students at home. Parents may also wish to consider taking PCR tests, which we know are more reliable to either reassure a negative status or alert you to a positive result.

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Thank you for your ongoing support in all matters, but particularly covid. We knew it was not going to be a straight forward Autumn/Winter and it is important we get a firm grip on the situation before any potential problem escalates.

My ongoing best wishes to you all.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter Roberts". The signature is written in a dark ink and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Peter Roberts

Headteacher