



# The Matthew Arnold School

Part of the Bourne Education Trust



27<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

## Face coverings in education settings

You will be aware that there has been considerable debate over the wearing of face coverings in public places, and that this debate has now extended to their use in schools. The government issued [guidance to schools](#) on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

As you are aware, The Matthew Arnold School is part of the Bourne Education Trust, and all its schools have worked collaboratively and successfully since lockdown to ensure a high-quality educational provision, and to provide as safe a framework as possible under which a full return to school next week can be envisaged. All schools have completed a full risk assessment commissioned by the trust from its health and safety consultants, Carstens and Robinson Ltd.

In order to allay any anxieties, and to reduce confusion about what is required, the school has decided to take the following proactive measures. These measures supersede any previous references to face masks or coverings in communications with parents. I apologise in advance for the length of this letter:

1. Face coverings to be worn by staff and students in corridors (at the Head's discretion) and communal areas, but not in the classroom or outside areas
2. Face coverings to be worn by visitors on arrival as a minimum (the nature of the visit to school and the areas visited will dictate whether or not face coverings may be removed)
3. Face coverings may be worn at all times if an individual chooses to do so

It is vital that everyone affected (parents, staff, students and visitors) are given clear instructions on the safe and correct wearing, removal, storage and disposal of protective face coverings, and that all are clear that face coverings **do not provide protection to the individual - they protect others from themselves**.

A face covering is something which effectively covers the nose and mouth. It is not classified as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which is used in a limited number of settings to protect wearers against hazards and risks. You can buy reusable or single-use face coverings. You may also use a scarf, bandana, religious garment or [hand-made cloth covering](#) but these must securely fit round the side of the face. We also ask that these are as plain as possible and do not carry any advertising or other messages which could be construed as controversial.

1. A face covering should:
  - Cover your nose and mouth while allowing you to breathe comfortably
  - Fit comfortably but securely against the side of the face
  - Be secured to the head with ties or ear loops
  - Be made of a material that you find to be comfortable and breathable, such as cotton
  - Ideally include at least two layers of fabric (the World Health Organisation recommends three depending on the fabric used)
  - Unless disposable, be able to be washed with other items of laundry according to fabric washing instructions and dried without causing the face covering to be damaged.
2. When wearing a face covering you should:



- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on
  - Avoid wearing on your neck or forehead
  - Avoid touching the part of the face covering in contact with your mouth and nose, as it could be contaminated with the virus
  - Change the face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
  - Avoid taking it off and putting it back on a lot in quick succession.
3. When removing a face covering:
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before removing
  - Only handle the straps, ties or clips
  - Do not give it to someone else to use
  - If single-use, dispose of it carefully in a residual waste bin and do not recycle
  - If reusable, wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions at the highest temperature appropriate for the fabric
  - Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser once removed
  - Once removed, store reusable face coverings in a sealable plastic bag until you have an opportunity to wash them
  - If the face covering is single use, dispose of it in a residual waste bin. Do not put it in a recycling bin.

The school will provide training to all staff before students return to school, and will talk to all students on as part of the [orientation and training programme](#) already published about safe practice when using face coverings. However, we do need to ask you to prepare your children as fully as possible before they return to school. We will not be providing face coverings, given the necessity for their use in wider society, although where anybody is struggling to access a face covering, or where they are unable to use their face covering due to having forgotten it or it having become soiled or unsafe, we will have a small contingency supply available. No-one will be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering.

Students will need to come to school equipped with enough coverings to provide them with safe cover throughout the day, and separate sealable plastic bags to store them in prior to use and after use if they are reusable. The school will ensure that residual waste bins are available in all classrooms and at visible points around the school.

We are aware of the additional burdens this puts on families at short notice. Please do not hesitate to contact us on 01784 457275 or at [info@matthew-arnold.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:info@matthew-arnold.surrey.sch.uk) if you have concerns about the return to school.

With best wishes



Mary Gould

Headteacher