



# St Robert of Newminster Catholic School and Sixth Form College



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**Head Teacher:** Mr. D. Juric  
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Dear Parents and Carers

As you will be aware, the government has announced a change to its guidance over the use of face coverings in schools. The guidance now states: *Nationwide, the government is not recommending face coverings are necessary in education settings generally because a system of control, applicable to all education environments, provides additional mitigating measures. Schools and colleges will have the discretion to require face coverings in communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed, if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances.*

The guidance goes on to state: *On the basis of current evidence, in light of the mitigating measures education settings are taking, and the negative impact on communication, face coverings will not generally be necessary in the classroom even where social distancing is not possible. There is greater use of the system of controls for minimising risk, including through keeping in small and consistent groups or bubbles, and greater scope for physical distancing by staff within classrooms. Face coverings can have a negative impact on learning and teaching and so their use in the classroom should be avoided.*

Although we believe that many measures are being put in place outside, as well as inside, the classroom, we realise that some students may feel more comfortable wearing face coverings in communal areas within school. Therefore, in line with the renewed guidance, students may wear face coverings in public spaces around school (e.g. corridors, reception, toilets, queuing for lunch, etc.). We do not expect students to wear face coverings in the canteen itself, as they would not be conducive to eating. Face coverings will not be worn in classrooms, as the layout and distancing of classrooms will minimise risk, and the effects on learning would be negative. Students may wear face coverings on the yard and field at break and lunch, if they wish, as well as when they arrive at and depart school. As previously stated, face coverings on buses are obligatory.

If students do wear a covering, it is important that they clean their hands before and after touching the mask – including to remove or put it on. They must also store the mask in individual, sealable plastic bags between use. Parents/carers will be responsible for ensuring their child's mask is clean or new each day.

If the local COVID situation were to change, or in the event of a local lockdown, these arrangements would be re-assessed, and we would advise you accordingly.

Yours faithfully

Mr D Juric  
Head Teacher

