

13 May 2021

Dear Student/Parent/Carer,

You will be aware of the Prime Minister's announcement that the recommendation that masks be worn in classrooms and by learners in communal areas will be lifted from 17 May with the Education Secretary adding that this decision had been taken as "infection rates decrease and the vaccination roll-out covers most adults".

However, the guidance [Face coverings in education guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/91222/face-coverings-in-education-guidance) also states:

"FE providers have the discretion to recommend the use of face coverings by students and staff if it is appropriate for their particular circumstances.

FE providers may consider recommending the use of face coverings where teaching settings are more reflective of a workplace environment, such as a training kitchen. If your education setting operates commercial training environments, such as hairdressing, barbering and beauty salons, sports and fitness facilities or restaurants, they must comply with relevant sector guidance in working safely during (COVID-19) and the current restriction guidance.

The reintroduction of face coverings for pupils, students or staff may be advised for a temporary period in response to particular localised outbreaks, including variants of concern. In all cases, any educational drawbacks should be balanced with the benefits of managing transmission."

There are again many opinions on the timing of these relaxations, nonetheless, we wish to try and ensure that we take the necessary steps to both support the continuation of the learning experience whilst also minimising risk for all involved.

We are therefore issuing the following guidance for students and staff attending HSDC.

1. Students should continue to carry a clean mask with them.
2. Students will not generally be required to wear masks around the college nor for classes where individual staff are generally content for this.
3. There may be classes operating within a workshop, restaurant, fitness centre or other training facility where mask wearing would still be required and in keeping with current restriction guidance.
4. There may be exceptions where, due to a specific medical condition of a member of staff, students are requested to wear masks in class. We would ask that the request where it arises is respected without question.



Mike Gaston, Principal & CEO

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5. We are recommending that face coverings should be worn by staff and visitors in situations outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas).
6. We ask that students continue to use lateral flow tests every three days and report their outcomes as advised.
7. We continue to ask that students follow the general advice. Everyone is advised to clean their hands thoroughly and more often than usual, particularly: after arriving at college, when returning from breaks, when changing rooms, before and after eating or handling food, after touching your face, blowing your nose and sneezing or coughing.
8. To clean your hands, you must wash your hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly, or use alcohol hand rub/sanitiser, ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered.
9. The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important. Avoid touching your mouth, eyes and nose. Cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when you cough or sneeze.
10. Please continue to use masks when using all forms of public transport, including college coaches.

May I also remind all students not come into college if they have symptoms and to let us know immediately so we can take the required action.

We all look forward to introducing yet another step that hopefully reflects the community gradually coming out of lockdown and wish students well over the rest on this year.

Kind regards



Mike Gaston
Principal and Chief Executive

