



# Northgate High School

*Inspiring excellence, fulfilling potential*

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Heads of School: Mrs Z Galley and Dr D Hone

1<sup>st</sup> September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer/Students and Staff,

We write to provide further updates on the guidance for the safe return of all children back into schools after what we hope has been a safe and enjoyable summer.

We fully appreciate that you may be apprehensive about returning to school in September and encourage you to visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

Throughout the last six months staff across the school have continued to make every effort to ensure that learning is maintained through face to face or virtual learning and that the wellbeing and safety of all has been our primary focus.

We are confident that our approach has been clear, sensible and achievable. It takes account of how we have planned for return, but also of the ever-changing national face of Covid 19 adjustments and advice. You may be aware that over the last few days the government have published new [guidance](#) on face coverings for schools and colleges with learners in Year 7 and above.

The key points were as follows:

- For schools and colleges in most circumstances (i.e. not subject to local restrictions/lockdowns) the government is still not recommending face coverings as necessary in educational settings.
- However, schools and colleges have the discretion to require face coverings for students and staff in communal areas where social distancing cannot be guaranteed, if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances.
- The use of face coverings in the classroom should still be avoided because they, “can have a negative impact on learning and teaching”.
- For schools and colleges in areas where local restrictions apply, face coverings should be worn by adults and students when moving around, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain.
- Further guidance on face coverings for areas where local restrictions apply will be issued and will come into effect on 1st September.
- Staff and students will be expected to buy or make their own face coverings. Schools and colleges will be expected to have a “small contingency supply” available to supplement this.
- Certain [exemptions](#) to wearing face coverings which apply more broadly will also apply in educational settings such as physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability.

The document makes it clear that, “this is guidance, not mandatory activity.”

We will continue to complete dynamic risk assessments for our school and if required in response to any changes in risk or national guidance we reserve the right to change these arrangements to ensure we remain fully compliant with government guidance and focus on the safety and wellbeing of all.



Unity Education Trust

With this in mind we wish to inform you that with no lockdown presently in force within Norfolk we are not expecting face coverings to be worn in school. However, should a student or member of staff wish to wear a face covering around school they may do so if they choose. No face coverings should be worn in lessons by staff or students unless agreed in advance by the Headteacher following an evidenced recommendation by a medical professional.

We are sure that you will agree that, while face coverings are certainly not a replacement for effective distancing and hand washing, they can complement the programme of safety in a school where space is at a premium particularly in corridors.

Students and staff will no doubt already have face coverings as they are currently required in many social situations as per government legislation. These face coverings should continue to serve their purpose in school if they are

- fabric, (Scarves, snoods will not be deemed appropriate in an education setting fabric face coverings should be washed on return from school each day)
- have no slogans or inappropriate graphics,
- can be easily stored in a bag or pocket and can be kept clean. (We recommend small sandwich style bags for children to place them in)

We would recommend that you have read the government's guidance below which is clear on the nature of the coverings and their use and disposal;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

#### Students with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities

It should be noted that students with hearing difficulties who rely on lip reading may need additional resources/assistance if their teacher is required to wear a mask during lessons

#### School Transport

Face coverings should be worn by all children using school transport, in addition to public transport, as there is unavoidably going to be mixing of bubbles in this situation.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to make contact through [office@northgate.norfolk.sch.uk](mailto:office@northgate.norfolk.sch.uk)

We look forward to welcoming you all back to the start of the new school year and wish to positively return to learning in a safe and supportive atmosphere for all.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Z Galley  
Heads of Northgate High School, Dereham Sixth Form College and DESA



Dr D Hone