



17 May 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Further Covid Updates - Masks

I wrote to you on Friday about the easing of restrictions in schools with regards to wearing face masks.

On Friday evening the government sent further updates around the Indian variant referred to as the B.1.617.2. They said the variant has been seen in Bolton and Blackburn and is believed to be more transmissible than the previous one— in other words it passes more easily from person to person -but they don't know by how much yet.

The government went on to say if marginally more transmissible, we can continue more or less as planned. However, if the virus is significantly more transmissible, we are likely to face some hard choices.

At the time of writing, the case rate in Wolverhampton has come down to 15.6/100,000. Over the past week, the case rate had been fluctuating between 17 and 22/100,000 so this further decline is very welcome news.

Given the concerns expressed in recent days about the new variant of concern, and in particular its transmissibility amongst the unvaccinated, Wolverhampton Local Authority are encouraging schools to continue wearing face coverings, at least until half term (2 more weeks). This feels particularly important now that indoor mixing will commence from 17 May and will increase the risk of transmission of the virus.

This is a precautionary measure to enable us to see how things evolve with the easing of restrictions and to understand more about the new variant of concern. We fully appreciate our stance differs from national guidance but it is for a short period of time. We also want to continue to support staff and the most vulnerable members within our school community.

Our priority is to reduce disruption to teaching caused by staff and pupils needing to isolate because of contact with a positive case. We will review our stance during half-term.

Until then please can I urge you to continue the twice weekly testing so that asymptomatic cases do not pass the virus on to others.

I shall update you as soon as there are any further developments until then let's work together to keep our community as safe as we can.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Stephens

Headteacher

