

Friday 6 November

Dear Parent/Carer

As you will be aware on Wednesday evening we received guidance from the Department for Education to accompany the national lockdown restrictions which will operate from Thursday 5 November until Wednesday 2 December.

The government guidance makes clear their intention for schools: *“Schools continue to remain open for all children and young people as they have since the start of the autumn term for the duration of the national restrictions. Being at school is vital for children’s education and for their wellbeing. Time spent out of school is detrimental for children’s cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children. This impact can affect both current levels of education, and children’s future ability to learn. It continues to be our aim that all pupils, in all year groups, remain in school full-time.”*

My priority at this time is to ensure that the safety and well-being of our students and their families and our staff and their families remains central to our day-to-day protocols. We continue to update our risk assessments and keep an awareness of the local rates of infection. Currently the picture in Wealden is similar to that of East Sussex overall. Since mid-July, East Sussex has had a weekly rate lower than the national average.

We will all have different experience of this lockdown; however, to quote a phrase heard recently: ‘we are not all in the same boat, however, we are all in the same storm’. I am proud that our collective support and unity of purpose has served us well as a community over the last 6 months. Our young people need us at this stage. It is important that we are as reassuring and calm as we are able to be with them. They are not blind to the media and they will know what pressures many people are under. Hence, we wish to ensure that whilst we adjust our practice to keep College a safe and secure place to be we also maintain a feeling of normality as much as possible. This will allow them to continue with the one job they have: to keep learning.

Attached to this letter is an update of changes to our protocols which will allow you to read the aspects that are relevant to you and not spend time on those which are not. Please can I ask you do read the attached guidance carefully, especially the requirement for students to wear face coverings, along with the associated documents: the risk assessment; the remote learning protocols and the contingency plans all of which can be found on our Covid Information page on the website.

Thank you for your continued support, it is much appreciated.

Yours sincerely



**MS C BARLOW**  
Headteacher

# Updated protocols in College from Monday 9 November

## Face Coverings

Updated Government guidance states: *“In schools where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained”*

Therefore

- From Monday a mask will be viewed as a form of basic equipment and all students should be equipped with one to wear in communal areas where social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Masks will also be compulsory in practical lessons where students may be moving between each other or face to face for an extended period of time.
- This is what the vast majority of students already practise but it now becomes mandatory. Failure to have a mask will be logged as missing equipment, they will be provided with one to wear and consistent failure will lead to the same sanctions that we operate as part of our normal structures.
- For students who believe themselves to be exempt from wearing a mask we ask parents to immediately complete the attached form: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScqZtiodVh8xCzN1l0BNfiZrX9ACrQYrk7ixyg3LUapsOGygg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScqZtiodVh8xCzN1l0BNfiZrX9ACrQYrk7ixyg3LUapsOGygg/viewform?usp=sf_link). They will be issued with a discreet wristband to wear which will allow them to make clear, without delay or extended discussion with any member of staff why they are not wearing a mask. This will also apply to staff and we expect all members of our community to be sensitive to these needs.
- As is already the case, face coverings must be worn on public or dedicated school transport.
- We also remind that all students are now requested to have with them their own hand sanitiser, pack of tissues and filled water bottle.

## Continued Indoor Mitigations

We are fortunate that at Heathfield all classrooms are able to be well ventilated, this is a highly effective Covid precaution and has, with other measures served us well throughout Term 1. To that end we re-iterate that students are able to wear “unseen” under layers and bring coats for warmth.

All classrooms continue, since September to have hand washing/sanitising stations enabling good hygiene at the start and end of lessons. Students must ensure they maintain these habits as well as respecting the 2-metre distance from adults.

Our one-way system and separate social spaces continue to keep our year group bubbles distinct and allow for movement that maintains flow whilst preventing bubbles mixing for more than a passing contact.

In addition, our robust practises for the cleaning and storage of resources and the significant additional cleaning schedules in place mean we are as proactive as possible in maintaining a safe environment.

## Clinically extremely vulnerable children and staff

The advice regarding children is: *“Parents should be advised to speak to their child’s GP or specialist clinician if they have not already done so, to understand whether their child should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable. ...Those children whose doctors have confirmed they are still clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend education whilst the national restrictions are in place.”*

*Parents of clinically extremely vulnerable children will be receiving a letter shortly confirming this advice.”* This will come from either the government or your GP.

Please make sure that you inform the College as soon as possible if you receive this conformation and provide a copy sent into [C19attendance@heathfieldcc.co.uk](mailto:C19attendance@heathfieldcc.co.uk) We will operate our remote learning protocols in this scenario to enable them to continue their education at home.

The government have made clear: *“Children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend education.”*

## **Music, dance and drama**

Government guidance states: *“Music, dance and drama can be undertaken in school so long as safety precautions are undertaken”* and we understand that has now been added to with the confirmation *“Schools can therefore continue to engage peripatetic teachers, including staff from Hubs and the guidance highlights that ‘all pupils should have access to a quality arts education’.”*

## **Sport, physical education, school clubs and activities**

We will continue to provide sport and physical education in the same manner we have since September, maximising opportunity for students to be outside and active as we strongly believe this is in their best interests for their physical and mental well-being.

Catch-up intervention and exam revision classes will continue to run as after school activities. All lunchtime clubs and activities can continue to run as part of the school day, ensuring they follow the government’s broader schools’ guidance.

Detentions, where necessary will continue to run with strict social distancing.

In terms of after school clubs, we are awaiting further clarification but current interpretation of the guidance suggests that unfortunately after school activities are to be allowed only for the purpose of child-care and therefore those clubs currently run as enrichment cannot continue. We are deeply disappointed by this and are seeking further clarification.

In the meantime, we will continue to ensure that learning within the school day continues to offer as full and broad curriculum as possible, exactly as we have done since September.

## **Keeping College Open**

The government guidance states the expectation, in line with our strong intention, that all pupils have returned full-time from the start of the autumn term and indicates schools should not put in place rotas.

As such, barring any extreme eventualities, we would expect to maintain the College as open to all year groups and fully functional with the aforementioned adjustments. However, I need to be honest that this could be compromised swiftly if the number of staff significantly increases who are advised to self-isolate due to members of their household contracting symptoms or having symptoms themselves.

I cannot run the College in a manner that compromises safety. Even if a member of staff is able to remotely deliver the lesson to their class we still need to be able to provide an adult in the room for safeguarding purposes. If the number of staff absent for these reasons escalates then we will have to consider moving to remote teaching on a rota basis for year groups to ensure equity and quality of provision. The provision for all these measures is set out in our [Remote Learning Protocol](#) on the website

Please read this guidance in conjunction with:

- Remote Learning protocols
- College Risk Assessment (pending update in light of new ESCC advice)
- Contingency Planning

All available on our Covid Arrangements page of the website:

[https://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/?page\\_id=2092035](https://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/?page_id=2092035)