

Dear Families,

I am writing to inform you of our decision regarding face masks following the latest guidance release (Friday 28th August) to schools. The official government guidance states the following:

'The government is not recommending universal use of face coverings in all schools. Schools that teach children in years 7 and above and which are not under specific local restriction measures will have the discretion to require face coverings for pupils, staff and visitors in areas outside the classroom where social distancing cannot easily be maintained, such as corridors and communal areas and it has been deemed appropriate in those circumstances'.

As a result of this guidance I can now inform you that we are making face masks **optional** at Erasmus Darwin Academy for both students and staff. **Face masks are mandatory if your child travels on the school bus.** The criteria below outlines our expectations regarding the use of face masks and this will be in effect from Wednesday 2nd September. Only in the event of a local restriction will face masks become mandatory. Should this happen, we will inform families accordingly.

The EDA criteria for use of face masks is as follows:

- Students must supply their own face mask. The face mask must be plain of colour or be designed with a simple pattern.
- Face masks are NOT to be worn in lessons by students.
- Students who choose to wear a face mask are permitted to wear them at lesson change overs and at social times.
- Students must remove their face mask before entering any teaching space, place their face mask in a sealable plastic bag and this plastic bag must be placed in their school bag. Students must sanitise their hands before putting their face mask on and after also after removing their face mask.
- Damp face masks must not be worn.
- Face masks must be disposed of at home and not in school.
- Students are not permitted to share face masks.
- Face masks are mandatory on school transport.
- Students are not permitted to use their face mask for any other purpose other than to cover their face.
- Any student who removes or touches another student's face mask will be excluded.
- Students are not permitted to draw on their face masks.

Further information about face masks can be found at the end of this letter.

We thank you for your ongoing and continual support as we focus on ensuring our students feel safe, and also make the start to the new academic year as productive as it can be.

Yours sincerely,

Mr P. Walklate

Head of School

Face Mask Information.

A face covering should:

- cover your nose and mouth while allowing you to breathe comfortably
- fit comfortably but securely against the side of the face
- be secured to the head with ties or ear loops
- be made of a material that you find to be comfortable and breathable, such as cotton
- ideally include at least two layers of fabric (the World Health Organisation recommends three depending on the fabric used)
- unless disposable, it should be able to be washed with other items of laundry according to fabric washing instructions and dried without causing the face covering to be damaged

When wearing a face covering you should:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on
- avoid wearing on your neck or forehead
- avoid touching the part of the face covering in contact with your mouth and nose, as it could be contaminated with the virus
- change the face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
- avoid where possible taking it off and putting it back on a lot in quick succession

When removing a face covering:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before removing
- only handle the straps, ties or clips
- do not give it to someone else to use
- if single-use, dispose of it carefully in a residual waste bin and do not recycle
- if reusable, wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions at the highest temperature appropriate for the fabric
- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser once removed