



20th January 2022

Face coverings in educational settings – update to guidance

Good afternoon,

Last night the government announced the decision to remove restrictions put in place via what they called “plan B” – their response to the rise in cases nationally due to the Omicron variant of Covid-19. One of the key elements of this announcement was a change to the guidance on the wearing of “face coverings” or masks in school.

Following a late meeting of the Local Authority Public Health team last night, I can now confirm:

- From today, staff and students at Malbank will no longer be required to wear masks in lessons. This was communicated with them this morning via a video assembly.
- From next Thursday (January 27th), staff and students will no longer be required to wear masks anywhere on site.
- Until next Thursday when these changes come into place, staff and students will still be required to wear masks in assembly, whilst moving around in corridors and in the boulevard during break and lunch.

Students should note that even when masks are no longer required, should they wish to continue wearing them in lessons or around the site, they are still welcome to do so. Everyone at Malbank must also be aware that although I hope we will not need to return to masks, we as a school reserve the right to bring masks back in as an outbreak control measure if there were to be a sudden rise in cases. This could (for example) mean we ask all students in year 8 to wear masks for two weeks to help break the chain of infection if we saw a sharp rise in positive cases in year 8.

Finally, I would also like to remind students that masks are still required in wider society until next Thursday so they should be aware of this if they visit shops on the way to and from school. They also need to check with travel providers about their mask policy as some companies may still ask people to wear masks beyond next Thursday.

As always, thank you to all our students and parents for your support in helping us respond to the changing picture of national guidance.

Yours,

Mr Harrison
Headteacher