

Wearing of face coverings in classrooms and transitional areas – Risk Assessment

Due to updates in Government guidance regarding face coverings, students will be expected to wear face coverings in classrooms, when an individual cannot maintain 2m distancing. Following the recent review by the Government the wearing of face coverings is to remain in place and is likely to be reviewed no earlier than the 17th of May, the Academy will continue to monitor for any changes to these guidelines.

The decision to implement this guidance has been taken in liaison with Public Health, as has been the case with all risk assessments throughout the pandemic. Public Health support the use of face coverings in classrooms at this time, for those who are not exempt, and that it is an expectation of students to comply with this. Additionally, Public Health have stated that:

- There is good evidence that wearing a face covering reduces the transmission of Covid-19 where distancing isn't possible and you [schools / academies] absolutely have a duty to implement evidence-based measures to protect the school community.
- There is no convincing evidence that face coverings are physically harmful to those who aren't exempt from wearing one, but absolutely understand that they are irritating and a barrier to communication.
- There is a risk that improper use (leaving on the desk, not washing, reusing when damp etc) could facilitate transmission if that person was infected and other measures (handwashing, cleaning) weren't being followed well.
- The Kent variant is now dominant and transmits more easily than the original variant we had when schools were fully open before so the overall risk of transmission from a single case is now greater than it was previously and therefore we are likely to see a pattern of more significant outbreaks unless we can enhance our preventative measures.
- We use lots of different measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment – we have many because none are completely fool proof alone, but the better we do each one and the more we put together the greater the chance of preventing transmission.

As has been the case throughout the pandemic, the health and safety of students, staff, parents and our wider community has been at the heart of all measures that we have put into place, please refer to the range of risk assessments on our website for further details. The Academy are committed to preventing the spread of Covid-19 whilst offering quality education for our students. We are therefore asking that all students wear face coverings in class unless parents have contacted us to inform us of a medical reason either physical or mental that would exempt from this request. All students who are exempt will be provided with a card so that they can show staff members this evidence of exemption on request. The Academy will try to mitigate the negative impact of wearing a covering for a prolonged period of time wherever possible, details of these measures are provided within this risk assessment.

School Name - The Boulevard Academy	Decide who may be harmed (insert ✓):					
	Student	✓	Contractors	✓	Visitors	✓
Background giving rise to this assessment: The recent change of Guidelines issued by Government for returning to school on the 8 th March.	Staff	✓	Vulnerable People	✓	Volunteers	✓

Identified Hazards	Initial Risk Rating	Existing Control Measures (select all that are in place)	✓	Actions / Comments	Residual Risk Rating H/M/L
Risk of infection (Covid-19) spreading to children and staff due to masks not been work in transitional areas and classrooms	H	Students to wear face coverings when entering the Academy grounds in preparation for the start of the school day and when leaving.	✓		M
		Staff and students should wear face coverings in all communal areas when moving around the premises unless the meet the exemption criteria.	✓		
		For students in year 7 and above it is recommended that they wear a face covering in classrooms and during activities where social distancing is not possible in line with the latest government guidelines.	✓	<i>Please refer to "Face coverings in education" Published March 2021 DfE</i>	
		Where social distancing in the classroom can be achieved, face coverings do not have to be worn when seated, however they should wear a face covering when leaving/moving around the room. This applies to staff and students. Staff will advise students as to when they can remove their face coverings in a classroom.	✓	<i>This is only a recommendation and the school will encourage students to wear face coverings as much as possible, however if a student wishes not wear one they will not be sanctioned for this.</i>	
		This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE Lessons. Staff will instruct students to safely remove their face covering when this is the case.	✓	<i>Face visors or shields should not be worn as an alternative to face coverings. They may protect against droplet spread in specific situations but are unlikely to be effective in preventing aerosol transmission when used without a face covering.</i>	
		Those who rely on visual signals for communication, or communicate with or provide support to such individuals, are currently exempt from any requirement to wear face coverings in education settings or in public spaces. To support these students, teaching staff may remove their face coverings when teaching if they are able to remain at least two metres away from all other students or members of staff.	✓	<i>Face coverings will be provided where a student is struggling for access or they have forgotten them.</i>	
Face coverings do not need to be worn by students when outdoors on the premises during break times, however social distancing should be adhered to.		<i>Refer to government guidance for list of exemptions.</i>			
The academy will provide students with additional breaks throughout the course of the school day to allow students to have more fresh air and a break from wearing a face covering. These will be on a rotational basis and will vary depending on weather conditions.					

<p>Safe wearing and removal of face coverings to reduce the risk of transmission from Covid-19 amongst staff and students.</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>It is vital that face coverings are worn correctly and clear instructions are provided to staff and students.</p> <p>A face covering should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 2 layers of fabric (the World Health Organization recommends 3, 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 <p>To support this, the Academy can provide a face covering for students on request.</p> <p>When wearing a face covering you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 taking it off and putting it back on a lot in quick succession (for example, when leaving and entering shops on a high street) <p>To support this, tutors will remind students how to safely wear face coverings during the phased return to school.</p> <p>When removing a face covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>✓</p>	<p><i>Staff and students will be made aware of the correct techniques outlined in this section of the risk assessment upon their return to school and periodically thereafter.</i></p> <p><i>Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn, and the face covering be replaced carefully. Staff and students may consider bringing a spare face covering to wear in the event that their face covering becomes damp during the day.</i></p>	<p>M</p>
---	----------	---	----------	--	----------

- 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.

To support this, tutors will remind students how to safely remove face coverings during the phased return to school.

Sanitising stations are available in every classroom and are also available in corridors. This ensures that students can safely wear and remove coverings as necessary.

Face coverings have never been required in classrooms before and as such this risk assessment is a live document and will be amended in real time.

Students will be encouraged to wear masks in a calm manner and supported when they have issues. We respect that students may need to remove their masks for short periods of time for a variety of reasons – which staff will facilitate as much as possible. However, sanctions will be enforced as per our behaviour policy if a student is rude or displays overt defiance towards members of staff.

Risk Rating Guidance: H= High M= Medium L= Low TBA = To Be Assessed - Assessment of the likelihood and or impact of injury and or damage. Initial assessment has been undertaken, complete the residual assessment based on your control measures/findings/additional actions etc.

Likelihood of Occurrence	Potential Severity of Impact		
	Negligible	Significant	Major
Certain	Medium	High	High
Likely	Low	Medium	High
Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium

Other Hazards Identified

Additional Control Measures to be Put in Place

Any other foreseeable hazards that are associated with the activities being carried out to be listed here.

Where you have identified other hazards record the additional control measures you are going to put in place to mitigate these below: *Highlighted in green text within risk assessment for clarity.*

Date of Assessment:	04.03.21	Carried out by:	J Mitchell & R.Howgill	Signature:	
Date of next review:	12.04.21	Carried out by:	R.Howgill	Date Review Completed:	12.04.21
Date of next review:	17.05.21	Carried out by:		Date Review Completed:	
Date of next review:		Carried out by:		Date Review Completed:	
Also refer to these other relevant documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face coverings in education (March 2021) DfE • Schools coronavirus (Covid-19) operational guidance (February 2021) Dfe 				

Note: Health and safety in our school is the responsibility of everyone and is about taking a sensible and proportionate approach to ensure that the learning environment provides a healthy and safe place for all who use it, including staff, volunteers, visitors and students.