



Montgomery Academy

An Academy within the Fylde Coast Academy Trust

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Inspiring Excellence Together

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Face masks in lessons at Montgomery

Dear Parents/Carers,

Firstly, can I remind all parents and carers to supervise their child to take the next Lateral Flow Test (LFT) **today**, if they did not do one yesterday. It is very important that we keep to the Sunday-Wednesday schedule, so that we can identify asymptomatic cases. If anyone in your household develops one of the three main symptoms of Covid (temperature over 38 degrees, a persistent cough or a loss/change of sense taste/smell) then the household should self-isolate and the symptomatic member of the household should book a PCR test.

I am writing to you today regarding the wearing of face masks in classrooms at Montgomery. You will have seen or read about the Prime Minister's announcement last Monday to go ahead with the next stage of Lockdown easing from tomorrow Monday 17th May, including that secondary school students would not be required to wear face masks in lessons. I was originally very pleased that we had got to this stage of returning to normality, as I know that many staff and students find the restriction uncomfortable in class.

However, in the past week we have had two positive cases at Montgomery and other local schools in both the north and south of the town have also had positive cases. Pleasingly, the number of people in hospital in Blackpool with the coronavirus was zero as of data released on Tuesday, but the number of positive cases in the town rose by 70% in the last week. Some local secondary schools have had to move some year groups to remote learning, as we have had to for half of Year 9. Our positive cases last week were the first that had been in school since we returned in March.

Due to high levels of cases in areas such as Bolton and Blackburn, all Lancashire schools including those in Fylde & Wyre have been recommended to continue in the short term, with face masks in lessons. Blackpool authority have said that schools can remove the requirement for face masks in lessons from tomorrow, though acknowledge that schools have the flexibility to make their own decisions as per the national guidance for responses to 'localised' outbreaks.

I am aware of at least two local schools where Year 11 students have had to self-isolate this week and I know how difficult that decision that must have been for the headteachers. Our Year 11 students have just two weeks left including 8 more days of assessments towards Centre Assessed Grades and the Leavers' Assembly on the last day. I do not want to take any risks of students missing out, so easing restrictions at this point seems an unwise decision.

Therefore, students and staff will continue to be required to wear face-masks in class this week unless they have a medical exemption. It maybe that we keep this in place until after half-term, but we will review the data and local situation again at end of next week. Please could you assist us in informing and explaining this decision to your son or daughter before tomorrow. Thank you for your continued support throughout this challenging period.

Regards,

Mr. Careless
Headteacher