

Thursday 20th January 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re. End to 'Plan B' Covid Restrictions

Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced yesterday that 'Plan B' Covid restrictions are to end in England from Thursday 27th January 2022. Mr Johnson said that England was reverting to 'Plan A', due to the impact of the booster programme and adherence to 'Plan B' measures.

At a Downing Street press conference, Health Secretary Sajid Javid said: "This is a moment we can all be proud of. It's a reminder of what this country can accomplish when we all work together.". Mr Javid added that this should not be seen as the "finish line" because the virus and future variants cannot be eradicated - instead "we must learn to live with Covid in the same way we live with flu".

Mr Javid urged people to continue taking steps to keep the virus at bay, including hand washing, ventilating rooms and self-isolating if positive. Mr Javid pressed those who were unvaccinated to come forward to get their jabs.

Reverting to 'Plan A' means that face coverings will no longer be mandated, though people are still advised to wear coverings in enclosed or crowded spaces and when meeting strangers. From today, secondary school pupils will no longer have to wear face masks in classrooms and we are told that government guidance on their use in communal areas will be removed "shortly". This means that the requirement for face coverings ends in classrooms today and in communal areas in the near future.

Yesterday and today, some staff and students have spoken to me about the end to 'Plan B' restrictions. I have also heard from some parents/carers, I have spoken to Unity Schools Partnership (our multi-academy trust) and with union representatives. The general consensus is that the use of face coverings, alongside our other control measures, has proven very successful in preventing outbreaks of Covid-19 at St Edward's.

The students and parents/carers that have contacted me have requested that the school grant permission for students to continue to wear face masks in classrooms if they wish. Mindful that we all want to do all we can to ensure that all students and staff at St Edward's can remain well and feel safe, the school will agree to this request. Students are granted permission to continue to wear face masks in classrooms if they wish. They should also adhere to all other safety measures.

From today, wearing face masks in classrooms is not an expectation or 'rule'. Of course, if you do not want your child to continue to wear a face mask in classrooms, this is your choice. We will support parents/carers with whatever decision they make for their child. Our aim is that all members of our community should feel safe and confident that we have their best interests at the heart of all that we do. Thank you to parents/carers for your continued support.

With my very best wishes.



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