

4 January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome back to the new term. I hope you and your families have had a lovely break and that those who celebrated it had a nice Christmas.

Throughout the Coronavirus pandemic Minerva Learning Trust has taken its responsibility to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff, students and community incredibly seriously. This has been at the heart of all our plans and at the centre of the difficult decisions we have had to make over the last 22 months.

Prior to the Christmas break we made the decision to extend the requirement for staff and students to wear a face covering in classrooms, as well as in communal areas of the school building, across all our Trust secondary schools. Since then, on Sunday 2nd January, the Government updated its guidance stating that *'From January 4th, we also recommend that in those schools where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn in classrooms'*. As such, the requirement to wear a face covering in classrooms across all our secondary schools will be extended until Wednesday 26th January 2022, at which point the decision will be reviewed in light of new Government and Public Health guidance as well as Trust-wide data.

The re-introduction of face coverings in classrooms is always a difficult decision to make, but it is felt that on the balance of Government and Public Health guidance, rising cases, increasing staff and student absence and uncertainty around the new variant, we feel this is the right decision to make in order to keep our staff, students and community as safe as possible. Processes are in place in all secondary schools for any students who wish to apply for exemption. Those students wishing to do so should contact the school and follow the exemption process they have in place.

It is almost certainly going to be a difficult next few months for schools to manage. We will do all we can to ensure the provision of high-quality face to face provision but, there may be times when staff absence means that a switch to remote learning for some year groups, collapsing of classes or other additional measures may need to be taken to keep our schools open and to ensure learning continuity for all. These types of measures will always be a last resort and will be individual decisions taken and communicated by each school. I thank you in advance for your patience and understanding if such measures do need to be put in place.

Lastly, I would like to thank you for your understanding and continued support during these incredibly testing times and take this opportunity to wish you a very happy, healthy and safe 2022.

Yours faithfully



Bev Matthews
Chief Executive Officer