Dear

I am a parent with a child at your school/ Local Authority/Academy group. I am delighted that the government has advised that masks no longer need to be worn in schools. However, I am concerned that the school/ Local Authority/Academy group still mandates that masks are worn by their students in communal areas.

The [Government have said that](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-covid-19%22%20%5Cl%20%22face-coverings) from the 17th May that “the current state of the pandemic and the positive progress being made, it is **no longer necessary to recommend** the additional precautionary face covering measures put in place from 8 March.”

They go on to clarify that this means that:

* Face coverings will no longer be recommended for pupils in **classrooms** or **communal areas** in **all schools.**
* Face coverings will also no longer be recommended for **staff in classrooms**.[[1]](#footnote-2)

Whilst it may be that in the future that a reintroduction of face coverings for pupils, students or staff may be advised for a temporary period in response to particular localised outbreaks, including variants of concern, [the government are clear](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/986106/Contingency_Framework.pdf) this is not a decision for individual schools or trusts to make - “**no educational setting should move to implement restrictive measures** of the kind set out in the contingency framework **without the explicit approval of DfE**.” [[2]](#footnote-3)

As you have chosen to make the wearing of face masks mandatory within communal areas in direct contradiction of the government's recommendation to remove them, I would like to remind you of your responsibility as a school leader. As you will be aware, it is the school leader’s responsibility to ensure a risk assessment for all schools’ decisions. Health and Safety law requires the school to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures - this has to include the potential harms of mask-wearing, which are increasingly recorded ([please find a link here to a summary of the harms](https://usforthem.co.uk/potential-harms-of-face-coverings-in-schools/)). The law also requires the school to register risk assessments’ details; the measures are taken to reduce these risks and expected outcomes. The [Government also state](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-covid-19%22%20%5Cl%20%22face-coverings) that in all cases, any educational drawbacks should be balanced with the benefits of managing transmission.[[3]](#footnote-4)

Have you, as school leaders, completed a risk assessment as to the impact of making school children wear masks in communal areas? If so, please can I have a copy; if not, the school has a legal responsibility to do this so, please let me know when this will be completed.

The World Health Organization (WHO) also places important responsibilities on those who choose to make children wear face masks. Where children are mandated to wear masks, there should be monitoring and evaluation of the impacts on the child’s health, including mental health, reduction in transmission of SARS-Cov2, motivators and barriers to mask-wearing. Please could you share with me any evaluation you have completed so far or inform me how you will be evaluating the impact of mask-wearing?

I look forward to hearing that you will be following Government guidelines to remove the requirement for students to wear masks in any area of the school or an explanation of why you have chosen to go against the Government’s advice and that any educational drawbacks have been addressed as specified in the guidance [[4]](#footnote-5)

Kind Regards

Potential Harms of Face Covering - Review of scientific papers : https://usforthem.co.uk/potential-harms-of-face-coverings-in-schools/

1. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-covid-19#face-coverings [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/986106/Contingency\_Framework.pdf Page 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-covid-19#face-coverings [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/986106/Contingency\_Framework.pdf Page 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)