



## **Face coverings guidance**

The Department for Education has said the use of face coverings in schools are generally not necessary, as the robust safety and hygiene measures that have been implemented, including students and staff keeping in consistent groups (bubbles), social distancing and undertaking regular hand washing, will help control the spread of any virus.

The Government guidance has been updated, however, to state that in areas of the country where the transmission of the virus is high and local lockdowns have been implemented, that face coverings should be worn by all students and staff when moving around the school. In the event of a local lockdown being implemented here, we would communicate with parents, students and staff immediately and would provide disposable masks in the first instance.

We do understand, however, that some parents, students, and staff may feel more comfortable if they have the option to wear a face covering on their return to school in September if necessary, including in areas where social distancing may not always be possible. Whilst not compulsory, face coverings will therefore be permitted where appropriate. This includes communal areas and corridors due to the layout of the building for example, but will not necessarily be needed within the classroom where there will be social distancing and social bubbles in action. If a student or staff member does strongly feel that they would like to wear a face covering in the classroom, however, then appropriate arrangements can be made.

It is very important that when wearing a face covering at school, your child understands the correct way to wear, handle and store them, as if they are handled incorrectly it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. For information on wearing, handling and washing reusable face coverings, additional information is included at the end of this letter and I would also encourage you to read the following Government guidance: <https://bit.ly/3guiK61>

Additionally, as they are not mandatory in areas of low transmission and your child should already have an appropriate face covering for other settings such as shops, they will need to be provided by yourselves, rather than the school. We would ask that the face coverings are multiple use, are as plain as possible, and are non-branded. If you would like your child to wear a face covering but are unable to access one, please do contact the school directly so that we can provide the necessary support.

We completely appreciate that these continue to be extraordinary times, and whilst the return to school in September will be a somewhat different to what we all know, we want to ensure that we make the best possible start to the new academic year for your child.

The safety and wellbeing of our students, and staff, continues to be our absolute priority and we have worked tirelessly over the last few months to have all safety measures in place so that we can safely welcome your child back to school come September.

## How to wear a face covering

### **A face covering should:**

- 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 two layers of fabric (the World Health Organisation recommends three 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

### **When wearing a face covering you should:**

- 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 where possible taking it off and putting it back on a lot in quick succession

### **When removing a face covering:**

- 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
- 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