

Face coverings guidance for schools

What is a face covering and why do we wear one?

- A face covering is something which safely covers the nose and mouth (the main sources of transmission). When worn correctly face coverings reduce the spread of coronavirus droplets from coughs, sneezes and speaking
- They should mainly be worn to protect other people from coronavirus, rather than the person wearing one
- They can help to reduce the spread of the virus from people who are contagious, including those who have no symptoms, or are yet to develop them
- There is also evidence they can offer some protection to the wearer, although it is important to note they are not a replacement for social distancing and hand-washing

How do we 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 sides 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
- You can buy reusable or single-use face coverings. You may also use a scarf, bandana, religious garment or hand-made cloth covering but these must securely fit round the sides of the face

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 taking it off and putting it back on a lot in quick succession (for example, when leaving and entering rooms)

[How to wear a face covering video](#)

How do we remove 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

Who should wear a face covering and where?

Secondary School: Face coverings will no longer be recommended for pupils in classrooms or communal areas. Staff are no longer required to wear face coverings in the classroom. Staff and visitors are recommended to continue wearing face coverings outside of the classroom where social distancing is not possible e.g. moving around in corridors and communal areas

Primary schools: Face coverings will no longer be recommended for staff in classrooms. Face coverings will continue to be recommended for staff and visitors where social distancing is not possible e.g. moving around in corridors and communal areas

Primary	Pupils	Staff	Visitors
Classrooms	✗	✗	N/A
Indoor Areas *	✗	✓	✓
Staffrooms ***	N/A	✓	N/A
Moving around the school	✗	✓	✓
Transport**	D	✓	N/A
Secondary			
Classrooms	✗	✗	N/A
Indoor Areas*	✗	✓	✓
Staffrooms ***	N/A	✓	N/A
Moving around the school	✗	✓	✓
Transport**	✓	✓	N/A

D = at the Headteacher's discretion

* Where social distancing is not possible

** PHE advises that children and young people aged 11 and over must also now wear a face covering when travelling on pupil or dedicated transport to secondary school or college (see exemptions). Additionally, primary year 6 children who have reached the age of 11 and children under 11 may wear a face covering if they are able to handle it as directed. Spot checks will be undertaken to ensure compliance. Local authorities, working with schools, places of education and transport operators as necessary, should work through the system of controls set out in this guidance [Transport to School guidance](#)

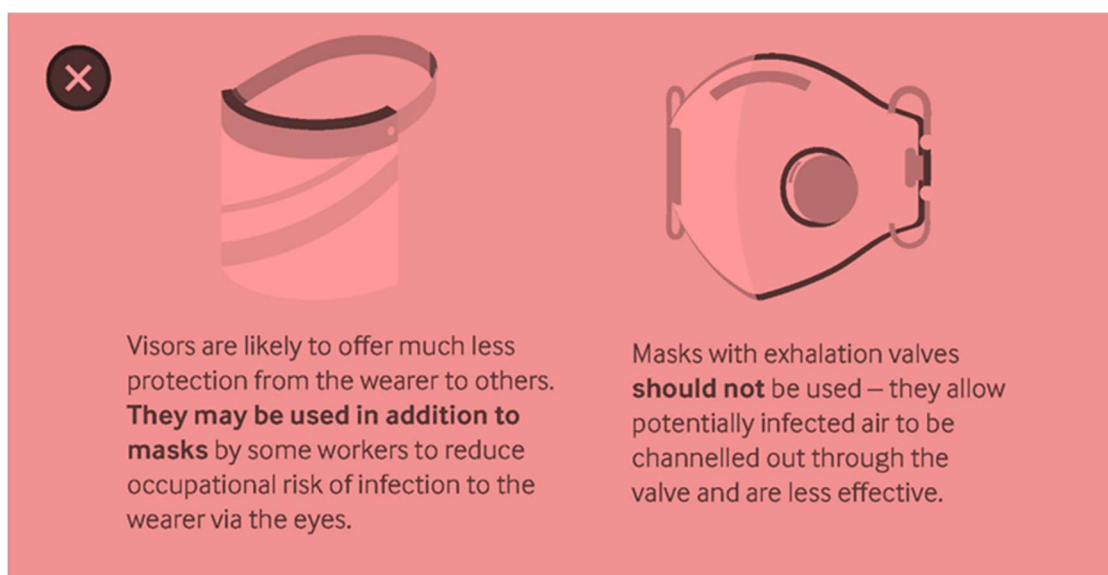
*** Where social distancing between adults is not possible

HOW TO WEAR A NON-MEDICAL FABRIC FACE MASK SAFELY



Is it safe to wear a face shield/visor or a mask with exhalation valve?

- Visors are considered PPE and are often used in Healthcare and similar settings in addition to a mask to protect the wearer's eyes from infection
- Gaps on the sides of face shields may allow aerosols to reach the mouth
- In schools, if staff feel safer wearing a face shield, it is ok to do so long as a face covering (as above) is worn along with the face shield
- Masks with exhalation valves should not be used



Access, exemptions and other information

- education settings should take steps to have a small contingency supply available should staff forget or soil their mask
- Some individuals are [exempt from wearing face coverings](#). The same exemptions will apply in education settings, and teachers and other staff are expected to be sensitive to those needs
- Local authorities should take account of the particular needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and, where necessary, be informed by the views provided by the parents and school.
- The reintroduction of face coverings for pupils and staff may be temporarily advised in response to local outbreaks or variants of concern.
- Where schools are delivering education and training, including extra-curricular activities and wraparound childcare, in a community setting (for example, library or community centre), staff and pupils will be exempt from the legal requirement to wear a face covering if they are in a private room or the premises have been exclusively hired for the sole use of its pupils and staff