

January 2021



Face Covering Policy

Approved By:	The Trust Board
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Review Frequency:	Annually

In preparation for the wider opening of schools whilst the national lockdown remains in force, the government updated its guidance in February 2021 recommending that secondary school children and staff wear face coverings (unless an individual is exempt from wearing one) in classrooms and when moving around the premises (excluding outdoor areas) and in communal areas. In primary schools, face coverings will be worn by staff where social distancing between adults is not possible. The wearing of face coverings in classrooms by primary school staff is optional. The government will review the guidance at Easter.

Statement approved at Trust Board meeting 16 March 2021.

1.0 Background to the policy

This policy is written in line with government guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/> updated on 27th November 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own> which was updated on 4th December, 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools> which was updated on 30th December, 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-contingency-framework-for-education-and-childcare-settings> updated on 1st January, 2021 & <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#exemptions-face-coverings> updated on 5th January, 2021.

The government is not recommending universal use of face coverings in all schools. Schools that teach children in years 7 and above and which are not under specific local restriction measures or in national lockdown, will have the discretion to require face coverings for pupils, staff and visitors in areas outside the classroom where social distancing cannot easily be maintained, such as corridors and communal areas and it has been deemed appropriate in those circumstances. Primary school children will not need to wear a face covering.

The World Health Organisation published a statement on 21 August about children and face coverings. They now advise that *“children aged 12 and over should wear a mask under the same conditions as adults, in particular when they cannot guarantee at least a 1-metre distance from others and there is widespread transmission in the area.”*

1.1 Definitions

- a) In the context of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, a face covering is something which safely covers the nose and mouth and is often referred to as a face mask. Students and staff can use reusable or single-use face coverings or use a hand-made cloth covering. Any face coverings used must securely fit round the side of the face. Students and staff may prefer to use a visor instead of a face covering.
- b) There is no prescribed design or colour for face coverings. However, scarves and bandanas tied around the head should be avoided for school use.

2.0 The wearing of face coverings in trust schools

- a) In Trust schools the wearing of a face covering in communal areas is optional unless an increase in the rate of transmission of the virus results in restrictions being applied as part of a national government intervention such as a local or national lockdown.
- b) Staff and pupils may wish to wear face coverings in communal areas where the layout or configuration of the school site makes it particularly difficult to maintain social distancing such as when staff and pupils are moving along corridors at lesson changeovers.

- c) In Trust primary schools where social distancing between staff members or visitors is not possible in communal areas outside of classrooms such as in staffrooms, the wearing of face coverings will be optional.
- d) In line with government guidance, **face coverings will not be worn in the classrooms** even where social distancing is not possible.

2.1 The wearing of face coverings on school transport and public transport

- a) In accordance with the DFE guidance, children and young people aged 11 and over will need to wear a face covering on dedicated transport or on public transport. Staff using public transport will also need to wear a face covering. This does not apply to anyone who is exempt from wearing a face covering as set out in <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#exemptions-face-coverings> updated on 5th January, 2021.
- b) Students travelling in school minibuses or similar transport, will also be required to wear face coverings.
- c) Schools will have in place protocols that children must follow for the embarkation and disembarkation in relation to face coverings.

3.0 How to wear a face covering

3.1 Face coverings must:

- a) Fit securely around the side of the face, covering the nose and mouth.
- b) Not be shared with other individuals, even family members.
- c) Be worn correctly
- d) Not be re-used if designed for single use
- e) Not be offensive or inappropriate to a school or workplace setting
- f) Anyone wearing an offensive or inappropriate face covering will be challenged and will be required to remove the face covering; school's will follow their behaviour management policy in dealing with such infringements.

3.2 Maintaining and disposing of face coverings

- a) Do not touch the front of the face covering, or the part of the face covering that has been in contact with the mouth and nose.
- b) Once removed, store reusable face coverings in a plastic bag until there is an opportunity to wash them.
- c) If the face covering is single use, dispose of it in the designated waste bin. Do not put them in a recycling bin or in general waste bins
- d) Make sure to clean any surfaces the face covering has touched using normal household cleaning products. If eating in a classroom, for example, it is important that you do not place the face covering on a table or desk.
- e) Wash the face covering regularly and follow the washing instructions for the fabric. Normal detergent can be used. It can be washed and dried it with other laundry. Throw away the face covering if it is damaged.
- f) Dispose of face coverings in the designated bins

3.3 Exemptions to wearing face coverings

- a) The wearing of face coverings is optional in Trust Schools unless an increase in the rate of transmission of the virus results in restrictions being applied as part of a national government intervention such as a local or national lockdown.
- b) Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings and these will apply to education settings should local restrictions be applied as part of a national government intervention such as a local or national lockdown. Under those conditions, the Trust would expect teachers and other staff to be sensitive to those individuals and their needs.
- c) In a situation where restrictions were applied as part of a national government intervention such as local or national lockdown, any child or staff member who is struggling to access a face covering or where they are have forgotten it or unable to use it because it is soiled or unsafe, schools will have a small contingency supply available to meet such needs.
- d) Horncastle Education Trust would not want anyone excluded from education or a school site because they were not wearing a face covering.