

Latest guidance from GOV.UK (Updated 4/11/20)

Guidance on the use of face coverings in early years settings, schools and further education colleges

In situations where social distancing between adults in settings is not possible (e.g. when moving around in corridors and communal areas), settings have the discretion to recommend the use of face coverings for adults on site, for both staff and visitors.

In schools where pupils in year 7 and above are educated and further education colleges, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Face coverings should also be worn by pupils in year 7 and above when travelling on dedicated school transport to secondary schools or on public transport to college.

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings and we expect adults and pupils to be sensitive to those needs.

When you do not need to wear a face covering

In settings where face coverings are required in England, there are some circumstances where people may not be able to wear a face covering. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances, noting that some people are less able to wear face coverings, and that the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

This includes (but is not limited to):

- children under the age of 11 (Public Health England does not recommend face coverings for children under the age of 3 for health and safety reasons)
- people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- where putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
- if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate
- to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others – including if it would negatively impact on your ability to exercise or participate in a strenuous activity
- police officers and other emergency workers, given that this may interfere with their ability to serve the public

Exemption cards

If you have an age, health or disability reason for not wearing a face covering:

- **you do not routinely need to show any written evidence of this**

- you do not need show an exemption card
- This means that you do not need to seek advice or request a letter from a medical professional about your reason for not wearing a face covering.

Some people may feel more comfortable showing something that says they do not have to wear a face covering. This could be in the form of an exemption card, badge or even a home-made sign. Carrying an exemption card or badge is a personal choice and is not required by law.

The reason for using face coverings

Coronavirus (COVID-19) usually spreads by droplets from coughs, sneezes and speaking. These droplets can also be picked up from surfaces, if you touch a surface and then your face without washing your hands first. This is why social distancing, regular hand hygiene, and covering coughs and sneezes is so important in controlling the spread of the virus. The best available scientific evidence is that, when used correctly, wearing a face covering may reduce the spread of coronavirus droplets in certain circumstances, helping to protect others.

Because face coverings are mainly intended to protect others, not the wearer, from coronavirus (COVID-19) **they are not a replacement for social distancing and regular hand washing.** It is important to follow all the other government advice on coronavirus (COVID-19) including staying safe outside your home. If you have recent onset of any of the most important symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19):

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of smell or taste (anosmia)

you and your household must isolate at home: **wearing a face covering does not change this.** You should arrange to have a test to see if you have COVID-19.

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

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

How to use a face covering safely



Wash your hands before and after using the face covering



The covering should closely cover your nose and mouth



Remove by the ears - avoid touching the front



Wash the covering regularly with other laundry