

Face coverings

Face coverings are intended to protect others, not the wearer, against the spread of infection because they cover the nose and mouth, which are the main confirmed sources of transmission of virus that causes coronavirus infection (COVID-19). It is important that everyone in the school community plays their part in keeping us all safe.

Students have been wearing face coverings in school now for some time, in corridors and inside where they are unable to keep socially distant. This remains the same:

“Where pupils and students in year 7 and above are educated, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff, pupils and students when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Face coverings do not need to be worn by pupils and students when outdoors on the premises.”

The government have updated their guidance in relation to face coverings and students must now wear a face covering during lessons. These measures will be in place until Easter. The guidance is here:

“In addition, we now also recommend that in those settings where pupils and students in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn in classrooms and during activities unless social distancing can be maintained. This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons.”

As you can see, students can be outside without wearing a face covering and will not be expected to wear a face covering in PE.

At lunch time, in dining areas, we will take the same approach as the government guidance surrounding face coverings and eating in public spaces which is:

“When seated to eat or drink you must put a face covering back on once you finish eating or drinking”

We recommend that students who wish to remove face covering at lunch time bring a packed lunch and remain outside or move outside immediately after eating.

For a very small number of students, with medical reasons, an exemption will apply. These students will have provided school with a medical note back in November and will be provided with identification so that staff and other students know there is a genuine reason for a face covering not to be worn. For example, those who rely on visual signals for communication, or communicate with or provide support to such individuals, are currently exempt from any requirement to wear face coverings in education settings or in public places.

Some staff may wear visors for periods in lessons to help communicate with students with particular needs. This should not increase risk as staff remain 2m distant at the front of the class and there is adequate ventilation in classrooms with windows and doors open.

Students must wear their face covering correctly following the guidance below:

“It is vital that face coverings are worn correctly. Safe wearing of face coverings requires the:

- *cleaning of hands before and after touching – including to remove or put them on*
- *safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between use.*

Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn, and the face covering should be replaced carefully. Staff, pupils and students may consider bringing a spare face covering to wear in the event that their face covering becomes damp during the day. Students should:

- not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it*
- dispose of temporary face coverings in a 'black bag' waste bin (not recycling bin)*
- place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them*
- wash or sanitise their hands again before heading to their classroom*

If students refuse to cooperate with us about face coverings, we will discuss this with you. It is vital that this does not create problems for other students or staff, in both their learning and their safety and wellbeing. We know how well students adapted to this back in November and were proud of their community spirit in thinking of others in the Trinity family first.