



Fact Sheet: Face Coverings in Schools

On 26th August 2020, the government published guidance about pupils wearing face coverings in school. This fact sheet helps explain what the guidance means for your child. Currently, this is *guidance*, and is not law. It applies not just to pupils, but staff and visitors too. It is effective from 1st September. It **does not** apply to early years settings and primary schools.

Quick Facts

- Unless Bolton is in local lockdown (tier 2,3,4) this is a **discretionary** policy. This means that Headteachers can adopt the face covering policy, or not, depending on whether they feel it is best practice within their school.
- The guidance applies to pupils in **years 7** and above, in any type of school.
- They are advised to be used in **communal areas and areas where it is difficult to maintain social distancing (such as corridors)**.
- They are **not** expected to be required to be worn in classrooms as it is suggested it can have a negative impact on learning and should be avoided.
- The guidance states that 'no one should be excluded on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering'.
- Children age 11 and above will be required to wear a face covering on school transport (unless exempt.)

If we are in a local lockdown (Tier 2)

- Schools will require pupils, staff and visitors in school to wear a face covering, when in communal areas, and where social distancing is difficult to maintain.
- It is still **not** expected that masks will be worn in classrooms

Who provides the face coverings?

It is expected that we now all have access to face coverings at present, and therefore they should be supplied by parents and carers. Schools however, have been advised they should have a small, contingency supply for pupils who arrive at school without access to their own face covering.

Exemptions

The same rule applies in all schools, as it does to children and adults who can't wear a face covering on public transport or in shops. If you, or your child, have needs or a disability that makes wearing a face covering difficult, you are not expected to wear one. This includes things such as (but is not limited to)

- People who rely on lip reading or facial communication
- People who cannot put on, wear, or remove a face covering because of a physical or emotional health need
- Those with sensory needs
- Those who need others to put the covering on, or who don't understand how to wear a covering in a safe way

The guidance on face coverings in general, updated on 27th August, clearly states that those who have an age, health or disability reason for not wearing a face covering **should not** be routinely asked to give any written evidence of this, this includes exemption cards. No person needs to seek advice or request a letter from a medical professional about their reason for not wearing a face covering. However, *it might be easier* for some children and young people to have access to an exemption card to show adults if they are asked why they are not wearing a face mask or covering.

What if school challenge my child for not wearing a face covering and they are exempt?

Most pupils with additional needs that could make wearing a face covering difficult will already be known to staff in their school. This will hopefully reduce the requirement for staff having to ask why certain children are not wearing face coverings.

If your child is new to their school and staff do not know them, or, they have a hidden disability or medical condition, it would be worth being in touch with your child's school to explain why they are exempt.

You can download a free exemption card, or phone image for your child to show to adults who may ask them about their face covering. These cards can be found on the governments website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>