

# Wearing face coverings in QAHS from 31 August 2020

## Background:

On 21 August the World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) released guidance advising that children aged 12 and over should wear a face covering under the same conditions as adults, when they cannot guarantee at least a 1m distance from others, and there is widespread transmission in the area. The advice also notes that **the wearing of a face covering should form part of a risk-based approach involving compliance with other measures including hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, adequate ventilation and physical distancing wherever possible.** In response to the WHO advice the Scottish Government has modified guidance regarding the use of face coverings in schools which you can access on the Scottish Government website ([www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)).

## Implementation of the guidance in Queen Anne High School:

We appreciate that there are a wide range of views on the issue of face coverings across the QAHS community. We have the utmost respect for these opinions and aim to find common-sense solutions to support everyone, which do not compromise health and safety.

In QAHS **use of a face covering** is recognised as one mitigation within a **package of measures**. The other measures are:

- **Hand hygiene:** Hand washing/sanitisation on entry to and exit from each class (a double block in most cases) and associated anti-microbial cleaning of personal workspace. Supervised hand sanitisation on entry to the building in the morning. Hand sanitisation stations in all concourse areas, wet weather spaces, entry/exit points and dining hall.
- **Respiratory etiquette:** Pupils and staff should use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze, and use bins that are emptied regularly for tissue waste.
- **Adequate ventilation:** Where it is safe to do so windows and doors in corridors and classrooms should be open providing high levels of natural ventilation. This safety measure has resulted in cooler temperatures throughout the building and pupils and staff are encouraged to dress appropriately.
- **Physical distancing wherever possible:** Staff are required to 2m physically distance from pupils and other adults. In most classes physical distancing between pupils is not possible and therefore the other risk-measures noted become more important in these circumstances. In a few classrooms with small numbers of pupils physical distancing is possible and is taking place. S5 and S6 pupils are required to socially distance in their wet weather spaces.

## Use of face coverings:

- Anyone (young person or member of staff) choosing to wear a face covering in school is permitted to do so.
- Face coverings should be worn by young people:
  - On entry to the building i.e. when they enter their concourse area in the morning
  - At all times in corridors (including when going to the toilet)
  - In concourse areas/identified wet weather spaces at interval and lunchtime (S5 and S6 pupils may be able to socially distance in their wet weather spaces and as such would not be required to wear a mask).
  - In the dining hall when queuing, but not when seated

- On school/public transport
- When entering shops in the local community
- Some people are exempt from wearing face coverings:
  - Staff where they can physically distance by 2m from others e.g. administration team when in the office or in reception, pupil support staff (including Guidance PTs) in the Integrated Support Hub, teachers operating from the front of the class...
  - Catering staff in the dining hall operating the tills who are physically separated by a partition screen (a face covering should be worn when moving throughout the dining hall).
  - Anyone (young person or member of staff) with a health condition or disability, including hidden disabilities e.g. autism, dementia or a learning disability.
  - Anyone (young person or member of staff) providing care for someone with a health condition or disability where a face covering would be inappropriate because it would cause difficulty, pain or severe distress or anxiety to the wearer or the person in the care of the wearer.
  - Where the Pupil Support Team in agreement with parents and carers feel individual discretion should be applied e.g. young people with breathing difficulties and disabled young people who would struggle to wear a face covering.
  - When eating, drinking or administering medication.
  - When communicating with someone who relies on lip reading and facial expressions to communicate.
- Staff should wear a face covering where they cannot maintain 2m physical distancing from young people and/or adults and are interacting face-to-face for a sustained period (15 minutes or more).

#### **Communication and support:**

- On Friday 28 August a tannoy announcement informed all classes of the updated guidance from the Scottish Government as outlined above. All classes were then shown a short video (<http://ow.ly/h0sD50B8q7o>) showing them how to put on, remove, store and wash a reusable face covering. The video will be shown again on Monday 31 August when the new guidance will be implemented.
- QAHS are promoting the use of reusable, washable face coverings rather than disposable ones. A step-by-step guide on how to make a simple face covering at home can be found at <https://youtu.be/5RctqmSo2tU>
- Young people and staff are expected to provide their own re-usable face coverings. Guidance PTs will have some re-usable face coverings which will be provided to young people where appropriate. The school will provide disposable face coverings as part of PPE.
- This document will be placed on the school website and shared with families via the weekly e-bulletin.
- No-one will be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering.

## What is a face covering?

- A face covering can be a covering of any type, except a face shield, that covers the mouth and nose.
- It is recommended that it be made of cloth or other textiles and should be two, and preferably three layers thick, and through which you can breathe. Religious face coverings that cover the mouth and the nose count as face coverings for these purposes.
- Transparent face coverings which assist communication for those who rely on lip reading and facial expressions can also be worn.
- Face shields may be used, but only if they are worn in addition to a face covering underneath, as the evidence shows that they do not provide adequate protection.
- If you are unable to wear a face covering, a face visor or face shield can be worn as it does provide a limited level of protection.
- Every time you apply or remove a covering, it is important that you wash or sanitise your hands first and avoid touching your face. When temporarily storing a face covering, such as in a pocket when moving between spaces, it should be placed in a washable bag or container and you should avoid placing it on surfaces, due to the possibility of contamination.
- If your face covering is reusable, after each use you should wash the face covering at 60 degrees centigrade or in boiling water.
- If your face covering is not reusable, you should dispose of it safely in the general waste bin. Disposable face coverings and gloves cannot be recycled.
- Don't create litter. Littering is a criminal offence and you can receive a fixed penalty of up to £80. Please respect our communities, wildlife and countryside and put disposable face coverings or gloves in the litter bin, or take them home to dispose of safely.
- If you have coronavirus or live with someone who does, you need to take extra precautions before throwing away disposable face coverings. Double bag your general waste (including face covering or gloves), store the waste safely for 72 hours, then throw it in the bin.

**If you believe your child should be exempt from wearing a mask and have not previously shared the relevant information with the school then please inform the Guidance Principal Teacher in the first instance.**