



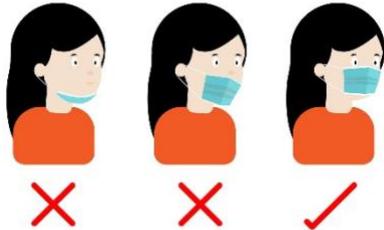
Face Coverings in WGGs

2020-21

In August the DfE announced that “from 1 September 2020, pupils and staff in secondary schools in local lockdown areas should wear face coverings when moving through shared areas of the school such as corridors and communal areas. Face coverings won't generally be necessary in classrooms, even if social distancing isn't possible.”

What is the current school policy regarding face coverings?

All pupils and staff will be permitted to wear a mask that covers their mouth and nose to provide an additional layer of protection. A mask may only be worn if :



1. It is worn correctly the entire time on site (see diagram).
2. It is worn in public spaces such as corridors, food areas, and so on. They may not be worn in classrooms or any practical lesson. It must be removed if instructed by a member of staff.
3. It must be plain, replaced every 4 hours and taken home for disposal or replacement.
4. It preferably has a clear plastic insert to allow your mouth to be seen.

Will the policy change?

The policy may change and this will be dependent on the following factors:

- If the school receives notice from either Public Health England or Hertfordshire County Council that local conditions require face coverings to be worn.
- If a person who has tested positive in the school and the wearing of face coverings is required to keep specific groups in school.
- A member of teaching staff is judged to be at high risk and a risk assessment concludes that all pupils and staff wearing a mask will provide sufficient protection to allow for the teacher to remain in school.

The level of enforcement will reflect the local and national conditions, this will vary from:

- Voluntary – at the discretion of the individual
- Advised – encouraged
- Expected – required; individuals may apply for an exemption.
- Compulsory and enforced – failure to wear a mask, without a school issued exemption that is clearly displayed may be sanctioned.

The areas in which a face covering must also be worn may also differ, from all people on site to be required to wear them:

- In all indoor communal areas, such as corridors, reception, food areas etc.
- In all indoor areas, including classrooms
- Throughout the school site

If the school does need to make a change in policy then the pupils will receive instructions on how to wear the mask, when to wear it and how to dispose of them. The behaviour policy will also be changed to enforce compliance, although pupils with specific medical conditions can be exempt.

DfE guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>



Can my child be exempt from wearing a face covering?

The school will follow the [government guidelines](#) that states exemption can be granted for the following reasons:

1. people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
2. where putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause severe distress
3. if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate. (Staff only)

If a parent wishes their daughter to be exempt from wearing a face covering they should make a request to the following:

Reason 1 contact the medical team on medical@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk

Reason 2 contact the relevant Director of Key Stage

j.shrimpton@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk Key Stage 3

s.cowling@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk Key Stage 4

c.bevan@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk Key Stage 5

If permission is granted then your daughter will receive an exception card that should be displayed behind her ID badge on her lanyard.

Staff should make requests to the Head.

Why are pupils required to remove face coverings in the classroom?

The wearing of mask coverings is one of a number of strategies that can be used to prevent the spread of the virus. The school has put in place the most important measures, for example educating the pupils on the importance of washing hands frequently, enhanced cleaning around the school, zoning the school to reduce the number of contacts a girl will have to name a few.

Face coverings do interfere with the process of learning. They muffle speech, and girls sitting at a distance from the teacher are least like to be heard and it also means the girls are less like to hear the teacher. Facial expressions can help a teacher to judge the degree of learning and attention, and as such levels of communication will be affected.

Although these barriers can be overcome, while the local conditions do not force the school to make these compromises then we will not permit the wearing of face covering that impact upon learning. However, if the conditions change and the wearing of face coverings in lessons is the alternative to sending home year groups or full closure, it will be a compromise we will need to make.

Why are pupils required to remove face coverings practical lessons?

In places or during activities when wearing a face covering will “risk of harm or injury, to the person or others - including if it would negatively impact on the ability to exercise or participate in a strenuous activity” then it is not appropriate. Heads of Departments of subjects in which these activities take place may decide if face coverings are appropriate in their area.

Which face covering should pupils wear?

The covering should be plain and cover their mouth and nose. We’d recommend a reusable one so that they can use it more than once, as they’ll need to take it on and off several times during the



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school day. If this isn't an option, they'll need to bring in several single-use face coverings each day. Their face covering should be secured to their head using ear loops only. Reusable and single-use face coverings are available to buy in shops or online. Here are [instructions](#) from the government on how to make a cloth face covering.

Pupils should also carry a sealable plastic bag to keep their face covering in when they're not using it so that it doesn't contaminate (or get contaminated by) other surfaces in school.

Reusable face coverings will need to be washed at the end of each day, ready for your child to wear the next day

If your child has taken a spare reusable mask from school, this will also need to be washed before they use it again

You can wash and dry reusable face coverings with normal laundry – follow the washing instructions for the fabric and use normal detergent

How should the face covering be worn?

All students will be shown [this video](#) from the World Health Organisation they know how to wear their face covering safely.

- Their face covering needs to cover their nose and mouth when they're wearing it
- They shouldn't touch the front of the face covering or the part that's touched their mouth or nose
- They should wash their hands before and after touching the face covering, including to take it off or put it on. They should store it in an individual, sealable plastic bag between uses
- If it becomes damp, they shouldn't wear it, and they should replace it carefully
- Single-use face coverings should be disposed of after use (not in a recycling bin)

Not following these guidelines can make the transfer of the virus more likely.