

Face coverings are not classified as PPE (personal protective equipment) which is used in a limited number of settings to protect wearers against hazards and risks, such as surgical masks or respirators used in medical and industrial settings. Face coverings are instead largely 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). 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.

Where face coverings are used, these should be a reusable cloth or disposable mask which loops around the ears or is secured around the back of the head with ties. It should not be 'bandana' style. The mask should not contain any valves, must be plain with no logos, patterns or words and of a suitable size for your child's face.

If a reusable mask is to be worn, guidance states that these should be changed every 4 hours. It will therefore be necessary to send your child to school with more than one mask and a plastic bag or sealable container in which to safely store the used mask.

Face coverings should only be used in communal areas such as corridors and canteens and should be removed in the classroom and stored correctly until it is next needed.

A face covering should:

- fit comfortably and securely against the face and cover the nose and mouth fully
- be secured around the head or ears with loops or ties
- be made from a breathable material
- ideally include at least two layers of fabric in order to be most effective
- be washed daily or left quarantined for 72 hours between uses

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
- change the face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
- avoid taking it off and putting it back on frequently in quick succession.

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 or ties
- do not give it to someone else to use
- if single-use, dispose of it carefully in a bin
- 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.