

Parents and Carers

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SKILLS

Council House  
Manor Square  
Solihull West Midlands B91 3QB  
[www.solihull.gov.uk](http://www.solihull.gov.uk)

Our Ref. LR/cd

Date: 27 August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Face coverings in secondary schools**

Since we wrote to you on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2020, additional [government guidance](#) has been issued about the use of face coverings by staff and pupils in some schools. As a result, the council is now recommending to all **secondary** schools in the borough that face coverings should be worn by pupils in communal areas of educational settings in Solihull. However, given that all schools are all very different, the final decision on use in school remains with individual school leaders.

For those of you who also have primary aged children, please note there has been no change to the previous guidance for primary schools and face coverings should not be worn. Similarly, there has been no change for secondary aged pupils of special schools at the current time, but the arrangements are being kept under constant review.

Pupils at secondary schools in Solihull are now also required to wear face coverings **on school transport** – this includes school specific bus routes as well as the public transport network.

Whilst the overall risks to children from coronavirus in schools are low, the use of face coverings for staff, pupils or other visitors provides an additional protective measure and we hope this will give you additional confidence as all pupils return to full time education in September.

Face coverings have been shown to protect others, rather than the wearer, against the virus because they cover the nose and mouth, which are the main confirmed sources of transmission.

This additional measure is part of a range of protective actions, including frequent cleaning, hand hygiene and reduced mixing of groups of pupils that are in place to reduce the risk from the virus in secondary schools and colleges.

In summary, this means:

- Adults and pupils in year 7 and above **should wear face coverings when moving around buildings, such as in corridors and communal areas** where social distancing is difficult to maintain, unless they are [exempt](#).
- Pupils in year 7 and above **should wear face coverings on school-specific buses, minibuses and taxis as part of home-school transport arrangements**, as well as on [public transport](#).
- In the light of current evidence, the wider protective measures education settings are taking and the negative impact on learning, **face coverings will not be necessary in the classroom**, even where social distancing is not possible.

Your child should ensure that their face covering is a tight, but comfortable, fit and safely covers their nose and mouth. To stop the accidental spread of the virus, your child should ensure that they:

- remove face coverings with care - only touching the straps, ties or clips **rather than front of the covering**
- store the covering safely in a sealable plastic bag in their school bag during lessons and other times they are not being worn
- avoid touching the face covering whilst they are wearing it
- avoid using a damp covering
- **do not** give it to someone else to use
- dispose of it carefully, if single-use, in a residual waste bin and do not recycle
- wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions if reusable, at the highest temperature appropriate for the fabric, changing daily (having one to wash, one to wear and one dry may be best)
- wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting them on and once removed.

Further information on the safe use of face coverings is available [here](#) with national guidance [here](#). Reusable and disposable face coverings are widely available to buy and details on how to make them can also be found [here](#).

**Please also ensure that your child brings a sealable plastic bag to school** with them to store their covering in whilst they are not wearing it. Your help with this is very much appreciated

Whilst face coverings provide an additional layer of protection, they are **not** a replacement for **social distancing, regular hand washing and staying at home if a person or anyone in their household has symptoms of COVID-19**. These protective measures remain as important as ever in preventing the spread of the virus so please help by ensuring the whole family keeps them up.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do contact your child's school in the usual way.

Yours sincerely



Louise Rees  
**Director of Children's Services and Skills**