

# Oakwood Academy

## Face Covering Policy for Years 7 and above



### **IMPORTANT**

OAKWOOD ACADEMY WILL NOT TOLERATE ANY FORM OF ABUSE, RADICALISATION OR EXTREMISM TOWARDS CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE

### **OAKWOOD ACADEMY MISSION STATEMENT**

"Promoting Learning Excellence- inclusion Beyond The Barriers".

### **OAKWOOD ACADEMY MORAL PURPOSE**

"We are united in the belief that together we can inspire all learners to dream, persevere and achieve so that we can change lives for the better, now and for future generations to come".

### **WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD?**

If you are worried about a child or young person speak to a member of staff immediately.

**"Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility"**

Policy adopted by the governing body on: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020

Chair of governors:

Signature:

## Policy Statement

### 1. Policy context

From 1 September new advice will apply to the use of face coverings by staff and pupils in some schools, and to learners in further education - years 7 and above in England.

The [Chief Medical Officers from all four nations in the United Kingdom](#) have made it clear that the overall risks to children from coronavirus (COVID-19) in relation to education settings is low and that the risks associated with not being in school certainly outweigh those of being in school. This is guidance, not mandatory activity.

The government is not recommending face coverings are necessary in education settings generally because a system of control, applicable to all education environments, provides additional mitigating measures. Schools and colleges will have the discretion to require face coverings in communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed, if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances. For example,

- Where the layout of the school or college makes it particularly difficult to maintain social distancing when staff and pupils are moving around the premises.
- Or where on top of hygiene measures and the system of controls recommended in the full [opening guidance to schools](#) and [FE colleges and providers](#), permitting the use of face coverings for staff, pupils or other visitors would provide additional confidence to parents to support a full return of children to school or college.

The use of face coverings in schools is generally not recommended by PHE for the following reasons:

- Children are less likely to transmit the virus to adults, and the risk of serious illness from COVID-19 is rare in children.
- Teachers should not be mixing with one another, therefore, there is no need for face coverings.
- School children are less likely to correctly wear face coverings, inadvertently increasing the risk of transmission of COVID-19, due to frequent handling, improper disposal and/or cleaning.
- It is difficult to wear face coverings over the course over a whole school day. Apart from discomfort, the face covering may become damp and soiled, increasing the risk of infections. Furthermore, face coverings are recommended for short periods indoors which is not the case over a school day.
- There may be negative impacts on communication, and thus education.

- Face coverings are just one of a wide range of measures that can reduce the risk of viral transmission in a school setting. Other measures, such as staying away from school if someone is unwell, good hand hygiene, preventing mixing between classes of students, and maintaining distancing between bubbles of students and teachers are as (if not more) effective.

Based on current evidence, in light of the mitigating measures education settings are taking, and the negative impact on communication, face coverings will not generally be necessary in the classroom. There is greater use of the system of controls for minimising risk, including through keeping in small and consistent groups or bubbles, and greater scope for physical distancing by staff within classrooms. Face coverings can have a negative impact on learning and teaching and so their use in the classroom should be avoided.

### **Where local restrictions apply**

Schools and colleges are recommended take additional precautionary measures in areas where the transmission of the virus is high.

In areas with local restrictions (intervention areas) in education settings where Year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain. They should also be worn on public transport and school transport to and from schools. It will not usually be necessary to wear face coverings in the classroom, where protective measures already mean the risks are lower, and they may inhibit teaching and learning.

It is vital that face coverings are worn correctly and that clear instructions are provided to staff, children and young people on [how to put on, remove, store and dispose of face coverings](#), to avoid inadvertently increasing the risks of transmission.

In the event of new local restrictions being imposed, schools and colleges will need to communicate quickly and clearly to staff, parents, pupils and learners that the new arrangements require the use of face coverings in certain circumstances.

### **Access to face coverings**

It is reasonable to assume that staff and young people will now have access to face coverings. However, where anybody is struggling to access a face covering, or where they are unable to use their face covering due to having forgotten it or it having become soiled or unsafe, education settings should take steps to have a small contingency supply available to meet such needs.

## **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safe use and storage of face coverings to reduce the transmission of coronavirus.

### 3. Aims

The aim of this policy is to:

- Inform good hygiene habits.
- Help to prevent the virus from spreading.
- Keep the school community safe.

### 4. Salford Policy on face coverings in secondary schools and colleges

The LA guidance in Salford is that schools' leaders should encourage all staff and pupils to follow the Department for Education and Public Health England advice. If having given this advice consideration, a member of your school community wishes or declines to wear a face covering then this should be allowed.

No-one should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering.

Please remember that face coverings are an additional precaution and not a substitute for social distancing and good hygiene practice.

Ask staff and pupils to try out wearing a face covering in a safe environment (for the length of a school day or set intervals) before they use one at school. This is so they can assess their practical use, having to put them on and take them off often with hand hygiene before and after. Some may find that they are not practical for them and cannot use them for long periods of time, as well as needing several spares.

Misuse could seriously undermine the overall infection control in the school. Therefore, the school shall monitor and review the use of face coverings in school (and if needed, can require that they should or should not be worn by particular groups or individuals in particular circumstances.

Face coverings for members of staff will be subject to the individual staff member's risk assessment in the context of the school risk assessment.

Visitors to the school premises will be required to wear a face covering if they are not part of a bubble and/or they are not already wearing PPE as part of their job role.

Face coverings offer more protection to others than to the wearer.

Cloth face coverings that are reusable are as effective as the disposable versions and they are more sustainable as they generate less waste.

## 5. How to wear a face covering safely

### A face covering should:

- cover your nose and mouth while allowing you to breathe comfortably
- fit comfortably but securely against the side of the face
- be secured to the head with ties or ear loops
- be made of a material that you find to be comfortable and breathable, such as cotton
- ideally include at least two layers of fabric (the World Health Organisation recommends three depending on the fabric used)
- unless disposable, it should be able to be washed with other items of laundry according to fabric washing instructions and dried without causing the face covering to be damaged

### 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 with the virus
- change the face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it around the mouth or nose area
- avoid reusing the same face covering before it has been washed. You will need spares e.g. to wear on the journey to school, at school, and the journey back from school.

### When removing a face covering you should:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before removing
- only handle the straps, ties or clips
- do not share with someone else to use
- once removed they should be stored in a sealable plastic bag (like a sealable sandwich bag) and placed in a pocket or school bag/handbag after use.
- if single-use, dispose of it carefully in a residual waste bin and do not recycle (see below)
- if reusable, wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions at the highest temperature appropriate for the fabric
- once again, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser after storing or disposing of the face covering

### Disposing of single use face coverings:

- dispose of them in your waste bin at school or a litter bin if you're outside
- take them home with you if there is no litter bin - do not drop them as litter
- Do not leave them out on desks or other surfaces
- Do not put them in a recycling bin as they cannot be recycled through conventional recycling facilities
- if you or a member of your family is self-isolating, do not come to school. When someone becomes unwell and tests positive, they should double bag all their waste e.g. tissues, disposable masks or damaged face coverings. They should store their waste for 72 hours before putting it in a 'black bag' waste bin.

### **Implementation**

School need to share the policy with parents/carers.

Parents/carers need to share the face covering policy with their child and practice the safe wearing, storage and removal of the face covering prior to wearing one in school.

Pupils should be able to adhere to the face covering guidance in this policy with minimal supervision.

### Exemptions

Some individuals are [exempt from wearing face coverings](#). Teachers and other staff should be sensitive to those needs.

No-one should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering.

## **6. Monitoring and evaluation**

Correct use of face covering will be monitored by all staff and misuse will be referred to the designated person.

Parents/carers will be informed if their child does not adhere to the face covering policy as this will undermine the overall infection control.

The pupil will receive guidance on how to use a face covering safely if they are unable to conform to the safe use.

The pupil can be exempted from wearing a face covering if they are unable to conform to their safe use.

*The use of face coverings in school will be reviewed using the latest Public Health and government guidance.*

## 7. Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside other policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents.

- School's risk assessment for full opening in September 2020

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

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

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-disposing-of-waste>

- Salford Coronavirus Infection Prevention and Control (version 8) dated 27 August 2020 which covers all residential, care and education settings in Salford.