

Face coverings in schools: how to make it work.

Some guidance for your son/daughter **if they choose** to wear a face covering when moving through shared areas at school.

Will my child need to wear a face covering at school?

No. Your child **may choose** to wear a face covering at St Thomas More High School, from when school starts in September.

We've decided to allow this measure because we feel it's appropriate to err on the side of caution given the information coming out of the World Health Organisation. However, we are not making it a requirement for all students to wear a face covering.

Making it optional at this stage also allows our school community to prepare in the event of Southend becoming an area of '**national government intervention**'. In the event that this should happen, the government **will require** adults and pupils to wear face coverings when moving around school.

Where exactly will my child need to wear it in school?

- They'll need to wear it when they move through shared indoor areas of the school where it's difficult to stick to social distancing. This includes corridors, the Concourse, study areas and the dining hall.
- They **won't** need to wear it outside or in their classrooms

What will my child need?

If you decide that you wish your child to wear a face covering they need to come to school with:

- A **face covering**. 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 school day. If this isn't an option, they will need to bring in several single-use face coverings each day. Their face covering should be secured to your child's head using ear loops only
- 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

Where can I get a face covering?

- Reusable and single-use face coverings are available to buy in shops or online
- A local entrepreneur has made available a small bag on a keyring containing 2 washable face coverings. These fit into a blazer pocket or attaches to a bag or keys. These can be bought via School Gateway for £5.50
- We've also included a link to instructions from the government on how to make a cloth face covering below.
- Supervise your child if they'll be making it themselves

How should my child use their face covering?

- Watch [this video](#) from the World Health Organisation with your child so 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)

How often will it need to be washed?

- 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

What if my child is exempt from wearing a face covering?

- They won't need to wear one in school
- Please let us know by contacting Mrs Walford via email office@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk if your child [is exempt](#) so that we don't ask them to wear a face covering

What about my younger child?

- This guidance on wearing face coverings doesn't apply to children under the age of 11

What if my child forgets their face covering?

- We'll have a small supply of spares available at school
- To be safe in the knowledge that everyone has one, please make sure your child has their own so that we can keep our supply of spares for emergencies

Sources

This factsheet was adapted from the resource produced by The Key for School Leaders, based on the following sources. All information is correct as of 11am Wednesday 26 August.

- [Face coverings in education](#), GOV.UK – DfE
- [Face coverings: when to wear one and how to make your own](#), GOV.UK – DfE