

16 September 2020



Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to update you with a change to our safety measures in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

As I have explained previously, college leaders are reviewing our risk assessments and control measures daily, with the intention that we will adapt our response as necessary. As the infection rate continues to rise nationally, we feel it is sensible to increase our control measures. Therefore we are going to ask students and staff to wear face masks when moving around the building. These will be removed to allow effective communication in lessons and, at present, will not be required when students are outdoors at break and lunch. Students will be able to remove their masks when sitting and eating in the Dining Hall or Milk Bar but will need to wear them whilst queuing for, selecting and purchasing food.

At the start of term we said that, if children chose to wear masks in school, they should be plain. However, we feel that it would be helpful to families for us to be more flexible about this. Therefore, masks may be plain or patterned but should not display logos or slogans. Any pattern must be appropriate for college and scarves and bandanas will not be considered a suitable alternative. Please help your child use good judgement when choosing their masks, although the college reserves the right to define what is acceptable.

In order to give parents time to acquire or make suitable masks, we are introducing this measure from Monday 21 September. However, we would encourage students to begin wearing a mask indoors sooner if they have them.

Students should also bring a suitable container for storing their face masks during lessons and whilst eating, such as a sealable plastic bag or spare pencil case. This is because students need to avoid handling the mask.

Some people are exempt from this expectation. This may be because:

- They can't put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- They are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate
- They are a staff member who is actively 'on duty' and needs to be able to communicate clearly.

If your child cannot wear a face covering for any reason, please inform your child's Head of Year, preferably by email.

- Year 7 tthomas@thespirescollege.com
- Year 8 cfaulkner@thespirescollege.com
- Year 9 mtaylor@thespirescollege.com
- Year 10 dveale@thespirescollege.com
- Year 11 dsmillie@thespirescollege.com
- Sixth Form rdavies@thespirescollege.com

The attached guide provides more information about the safe use of face masks and the college expectations of use.

More information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#when-you-do-not-need-to-wear-a-face-covering>

And here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>

Thank you in anticipation of your support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Newton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alex Newton
Principal

Face coverings in schools: how to make it work

Here's what you and your child can expect now secondary pupils in schools introducing this measure will need to wear a face covering when moving through shared areas at school.

When will my child need to wear a face covering at school?

Your child will need to wear a face covering at our school:

From Monday 21 September 2020. We've decided to introduce this measure because we feel it's appropriate to keep everyone safe at school, based on the latest guidance

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 and food serveries.
 - If your child travels to school on public transport, or a transport service that only carries pupils.
 - They **won't** need to wear a face covering outside or in their classroom
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What will my child need?

Your child needs 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'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
 - 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
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Where can I get a face covering?

- Reusable and single-use face coverings are available to buy in shops or online
 - We've attached instructions from the government on how to make a cloth face covering
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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
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- They shouldn't touch the front of the face covering or the part that's touched their mouth or nose
 - They should wash or sanitise 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)
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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
 - You can wash and dry reusable face coverings with normal laundry – follow the washing instructions for the fabric and use normal detergent
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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 your child's Head of Year if your child [is exempt](#) so that we don't ask them to wear a face covering
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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 produced by The Key for School Leaders, based on the following sources. All information is correct as of 11am Thursday 3 September.

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