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Public Health

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Re: Face coverings in schools

Following a comprehensive discussion on face coverings this morning, the Bolton Health Protection Board supports the use of the face coverings in the following settings:

- In secondary schools, both pupils and staff to wear face coverings when in enclosed communal areas or when moving around the school.
- In secondary schools, cloth face coverings are not considered necessary to be worn in the classroom where other Covid Secure measures are in place
- In primary schools, all staff to wear face coverings when in enclosed communal areas or moving around the school
- In primary schools, pupils are not recommended to wear face coverings

It is acknowledged that the use of face coverings is one type of infection and prevention control (IPC) measures, alongside other key measures such as regular handwashing, social distancing (2m where possible, 1m + where not) and good surface hygiene as per national guidance. It is important to wear a face covering correctly. Appendix A outlines how to wear a face covering, we advise schools to share this information with staff and parents.

It is acknowledged that secondary aged pupils will need to wear face covering on public transport so many will already have one. The use of face coverings is expected and accepted within community settings, such as shops and public transport. Therefore, the use of face coverings within school settings as outlined above can be considered as a social responsibility to protect others, as opposed to protecting ourselves. It is important to encourage and educate around the use of face coverings, and remember that wearing a face covering is an additional protection and is to be used with other measures.

How to wear a face covering

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 Organization 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
- avoid taking it off and putting it back on a lot in quick succession (for example, when leaving and entering shops on a high street)

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, ties or clips
- do not give it to someone else to use
- if single-use, dispose of it carefully in a residual waste bin and do not recycle
- 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

