



Dec. 1st 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

You may have seen media reports last night that the Government has decided to adopt NPHEP's advice that children in 3rd - 6th classes should wear face coverings to school. We have received guidance from the Department of Education (DE) on the matter and I attach this guidance below. I also attach a letter to parents from the CMO (Chief Medical Officer) Tony Holohan.

The instruction from the DE is that the wearing of face coverings in 3rd to 6th classes is now required, however details of exemptions are included.

Please read this guidance carefully.

We realise that this is very short notice and that some children may not have a suitable face covering to wear to school at the moment, however, we are asking parents/guardians to please provide face coverings for 3rd - 6th class pupils in the coming days. Please see attached guidance on face coverings for children.

We are also aware that there are cases where exemptions apply but medical certification has not yet been acquired. If an exemption applies to your child, please inform your child's teacher and email the school at principal@scoilnaomhfeichin.ie

The DE has asked schools to show flexibility over the coming days as we adapt to this new safety measure and my sincere hope is that we can continue to work together for the protection of our pupils and the wider school community.

We expect further advice and clarification on this matter from the DE over the coming days and as we get more information, we will pass this on to you.

Our focus for the rest of this week will be on encouraging and supporting all members of our school community with regard to the implementation of this new public health measure while we await further guidance and clarification.

A school Board of Management meeting has been arranged for this evening (Wed) to discuss this matter and to agree on a way forward as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,

Bryan Collins
School Principal

**GUIDANCE FORWARDED TO ALL PRIMARY SCHOOLS ON NOV 30th .
THIS RELATES TO THE WEARING OF MASKS AT SCHOOL FOR PUPILS IN 3rd-6th
CLASSES.**

Face coverings in Primary schools

NPHET has recommended the wearing of face masks/coverings by children aged nine years and above on public transport, in retail and other indoor public settings as already required for children aged 13 years and over. They have also recommended that this is introduced for children in 3rd class and above in primary schools. They have advised that this measure is being introduced on a temporary basis and is subject to review in mid-February 2022.

Guidance on face masks/coverings in Primary schools

Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

Wearing of face masks/coverings

Pupils from third class and up in primary schools are required to wear a face mask/covering. The exemptions to this are set out below.

Face masks/coverings

Face masks/coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face mask/covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Face masks/coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.

Face masks/coverings must not contain any slogans/logos/images that may cause upset or be deemed offensive to any member of the school community.

Visors

Face masks/coverings are more effective than visors. In the limited circumstances where a face mask/covering cannot be worn clear visors must be considered.

Exemptions

A medical certificate to certify that a person falls into a category listed below must be provided to the school on behalf of, any person (pupil) who claims that they are covered by the exemptions below:

- any pupil with difficulty breathing or other relevant medical conditions
- any pupil who is unable to remove the cloth face-covering or visor without assistance
- any pupil who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the cloth face covering or visor, for example pupils with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

Schools will be best placed to identify those children whose complex needs are such that the wearing of face covering may not be possible for them, and to discuss this with parents as required. In such circumstances a school may not require medical certification to provide an exemption to the wearing of face coverings. In other circumstances where a medical certificate is not provided that person (staff or pupil) will be refused entry to the school.

Directions for effective use of face masks/coverings

- Information should be provided by schools on the proper use, removal, and washing of face coverings. Advice on how to use face coverings properly can be found [here](#).

- All pupils should be reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.
- Face masks/coverings should be stored in a designated space, for example, in an individually labelled container or bag.
- Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.
- Face masks/coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.

Pupils using school transport

Pupils from 3rd class and up on the primary transport scheme are required to wear face masks/coverings subject to the exemptions above.

Mixed classes in single rooms

Where there are mixed classes, e.g. 2nd and 3rd class in a single classroom, schools should note that only children in 3rd class and above, are required to wear face masks. As per previous advice, however, parents of other children who would prefer that their children wear a face mask are not precluded from doing this.

Provision of face masks

Parents should be advised that they obtain face masks for their children which fit properly and are comfortable for the child to wear. In the event that a child forgets, loses or damages their masks during the course of the school day, then the school should have a sufficient supply to replace the mask for the child in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day or where required on an ongoing basis.

How to use face coverings: A guide for parents and children 3rd to 6th class



Coronavirus
COVID-19
National
Programme

Children in 3rd to 6th class are required to wear masks in primary school



You should arrive at school with your own face covering



Always clean your hands before and after wearing a face covering

Check your fit



Make sure mask fabric covering is comfortable for you to wear

Make sure it is easy to fit and covers your nose and mouth

Ensure the face covering fits under your chin

Tighten the loops so it's snug around your face, without gaps

Don't touch or fidget with the face covering while it's on

You should not



Wear your face covering below the nose

Leave your chin exposed

Wear it loosely with gaps on the sides

Push it under your chin to rest on your nose

Always follow these steps



Wash your hands before and after handling your face covering

Change your face covering if it is dirty, wet or damaged

Carry unused face coverings in a sealable clean waterproof bag, like a ziplock

Carry a second bag to put used face coverings in

Wash cloth face coverings on the highest temperature for cloth

Safe removal and disposing of mask



Use the ties or ear loops to take the face coverings off

Do not touch the front when you take it off

Don't forget to clean your hands and keep social distance

Always dispose of single-use masks properly in a bin



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