



References:

- A. Schools coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance February 2021.
- B. 'Face coverings in Education' March 2021.

The Government has updated guidance reflecting the progress to Step 3 of the Government's roadmap as the threat from the pandemic recedes. Reference A provides guidance to schools on the use of face coverings in an educational setting and further guidance has been provided in Reference B. The protocol below sets out the use of face coverings by staff to be adopted at St Mary's from 17 May 2021. Should you have any comments or concerns regarding this protocol, please do not hesitate to raise them with the Senior Deputy or Bursar. The face covering protocol will be kept under regular review and may be changed at short notice.

**Government Guidance.** The key Government guidance states:

*From 17 May, in line with Step 3 of the roadmap, face coverings will no longer be recommended for pupils in classrooms or communal areas in all schools. Face coverings will also no longer be recommended for staff in classrooms. In all schools we continue to recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and visitors in situations outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas).*

The updated requirement for staff at St Mary's is therefore as follows:

**Staff are required to wear face coverings:**

- When moving around the school buildings in corridors and stairs; this includes residential staff working in the boarding areas.
- When in a large group meeting such as a house meeting or year group meeting when 2m social distancing cannot be maintained.
- When moving around the refectory unless sitting at a table eating a meal.
- When meeting with pupils in staff offices - unless you decide that due to other good control measures (e.g. good ventilation, room for social distancing, screen and short duration of the meeting) that the risk is already suitably low and you therefore choose to allow the pupil the option to remove the face covering and you also choose not to wear one.
- In multi-occupancy offices unless other control measures are in place (e.g. good ventilation, room for social distancing, screen) and all staff in the office are content with the arrangements.
- When visiting the school Infirmary.

**Staff need **not** wear face coverings:**

- When in classrooms where 2m social distancing between the teacher and the pupils can be maintained.
- When attending a large group meeting or event when 2m social distancing from pupils and other staff can be maintained.
- When the fire alarm sounds when it is more important to make a swift and safe exit from the building.
- When in a workspace such as an office where other control measures are in place such as 2m social distancing, good ventilation, short duration.

- Outside.

**What is a face covering?** At St Mary's a face covering must be either a single-use or reusable mask that securely covers the mouth and nose; a scarf or similar is not acceptable. A visor may be used in addition to a face covering but cannot be used instead of a face covering unless the member of staff is exempt from face coverings.

**Safe use of a face covering.** Staff must be able to wear a face covering safely and be able to guide and support pupils. This WHO video explains how to wear a fabric face mask safely:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Tv2BVN\\_WTk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Tv2BVN_WTk)

**Exemptions.** If any member of staff has a medical or other reason for not wearing a face covering then they are requested to meet and discuss this with the Senior Deputy Headmistress or Bursar.

### **Specific department guidance:**

**Housekeeping.** Housekeeping staff are required to wear a face covering at all times when working within the school buildings unless they are very obviously working on their own. Face coverings may be removed during breaks as long as the area is well ventilated and social distancing is in effect.

**Catering.** Front of house catering staff are to wear face coverings during service. They should continue to wear them if social distancing cannot be achieved between service. The pupil dining room must be kept well ventilated at all times. Catering staff who work in the kitchen need not wear face coverings throughout all their shift but should continue to strive to maintain 2m social distance wherever and whenever possible; it is understood that given the layout of the kitchens this is a challenge. Should a member of the kitchen team need to move to the front of house at any time, they must wear a face covering. Catering managers and supervisors must ensure that the kitchen is exceptionally well ventilated at all times. This approach is in line with similar establishments<sup>1</sup>.

**Estates.** Estates staff are required to wear face coverings at all times within the school buildings. When working in a specific area and working in isolation as part of programmed work, the Estates Manager, Maintenance Manager or Estates Support Manager may authorise the work to be completed with no face covering. Face coverings may be removed during breaks as long as the area is well ventilated and social distancing is maintained. Staff on call-out roster should wear face coverings until the nature of the call-out has been determined.

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<sup>1</sup> Telecon GKB/ISCC 5 Nov 20.