

HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM GUIDANCE REGISTER		Guidance	G028
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Introduction

From the 14th September 2020, there is a legal requirement to wear face coverings on public transport is extended to indoor public places. Expert UK advice advocates for the widespread use of face coverings to reduce transmission of COVID-19 from asymptomatic individuals (individual's not showing symptoms). Aberystwyth University expects all staff, students and visitors to comply with our legal requirement and use face coverings in all indoor locations across our campuses, to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

The University requires a critical mass of its staff and students to consistently use face coverings while indoors to provide contingencies to other COVID-19 risk reduction behaviours. The use of face coverings are a supplement to social distancing, and good hand and respiratory hygiene, to further reduce the risk to members of our University and the community.

The University will ensure the equitable accessibility of face coverings for all its members and will provide two reusable face coverings per student and per staff member who is expected to attend indoor spaces on campus rather than working from home. Supporting our Sustainability Policy, we strongly recommend face coverings should be reusable. Single use disposable face coverings will be available for the occasional use of visitors.

The use of face coverings will increase communication difficulty for many people, especially those that are deaf or hard of hearing. Please be aware that not everyone will understand you while wearing a face covering. Deaf people will not hear or see you speaking. It is important to check individual communication needs with the people you are talking to and be mindful of different strategies for communicating in general. Please consider alternative ways of communicating, such as typing in your mobile phone so another person can read your message, writing with pen and paper, or taking a further step back and lifting your mask temporarily to communicate with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Transparent face coverings will also be available for lecturers, relevant staff and those who may accompanying somebody who relies on lip reading where they need to communicate.

How do face coverings work in reducing COVID-19 spread?

Depending on the quality of the face covering and how it is used, the wearer may inhale fewer infectious droplets from others, providing some direct protective effect to the wearer. It's difficult to quantify this directly protective effect to the wearer. However, face coverings play an important role as a source control measure. In other words, a person who emits infectious droplets is less able to spread them to others if they are wearing a face covering. In summary, face coverings primarily reduce COVID-19 transmission by preventing spread from infected individuals rather than directly protecting the wearer from infection.

Face coverings are not a replacement for social distancing and regular hand washing. It is important to follow all the other government advice on coronavirus (COVID-19) including [leaving your home and seeing other people](#). If you have recent onset of any of the most important symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19):

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of smell or taste (anosmia)

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You and your household must immediately [isolate at home](#): wearing a face covering does not change this. You should arrange to have [a test to see if you have COVID-19](#).

What is a face covering?

The World Health Organisation recommends, as part of the wider range of measures to prevent transmission, that three-layer face coverings be worn over the mouth, nose and chin.

The University will provide two face coverings, and you will be able to purchase further face coverings at cost price.

You are able to wear a different face covering of your choice provided that it is of suitable quality and standard. Your face covering should not be offensive to others and should not breach the [student rules and regulations](#).

[How to make a three layer face covering.](#)

What is a face mask?

Face masks are personal protective equipment (PPE) which protect the user against health or safety risks at work. They include different types of respiratory protective equipment (RPE), such as fold-flat respirators (FFP2 or FFP3). Risk assessments will identify the requirement for PPE, should FFP2 or FFP3 face masks be required, these will be fit-tested, instructions provided and replaced on a regular basis as a control measure. The University will continue to provide PPE as identified for work activities. For most activities on campus a face covering will suffice unless you are informed otherwise

[Personal protective equipment guidance.](#)

Where do I get a face covering?

Collection points will be available for staff and students to obtain their face coverings. This information will be available on the webpages and communicated via email.

Reception areas will hold a stock of single use coverings for occasional use by visitors to our buildings that have not been informed of the requirement beforehand.

Where and when does the requirement apply?

The requirement applies to all University enclosed buildings such as lecture and teaching rooms, social and study spaces, corridors, multi-use offices, and commercial venues such as Sports Centre, Arts Centre and Hospitality outlets.

Face coverings should be worn from the building entry for the duration of an individual's occupation of and until exiting the building (unless an exemption applies, see below).

Users of transport provided by the University such as the bus between Penglais and Llanbadarn campus or bus for fieldtrip activities will be required to wear face coverings. Face coverings should be worn for the duration

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of the journey on transport. This means they must be worn from when you get on the vehicle and they must stay in place until you get off.

There is no requirement to wear a face covering whilst waiting for transport to arrive. At a bus stop, for example, normal practice of maintaining 2 metre social distancing should be observed.

The use of University vehicles will be assessed based on the hierarchy of risk controls for all journeys to eliminate, substitute, engineering, administrative and lastly personal protective equipment controls.

There is no requirement to wear your face covering whilst undertaking physical exercise in our Sports or Arts Centre. There is a requirement to wear your face cover whilst travelling through our buildings to the location of the activity and on your exit route.

A single office is a location where you may remove your face covering after entering the building. You should not accept any unplanned visitors to your office and meetings should be held virtually, where possible. Please ensure your face covering is put back on to travel through main offices, corridors to kitchens, toilet facilities and exiting the facilities.

Who does the requirement apply to?

The requirement applies to all staff, students, contractors and visitors over the age of 11 to all University Buildings.

All contractors, suppliers and third parties to the University will be informed of the University's requirement to wear face coverings and should arrive prepared with face coverings. Their employer may wish to provide a lanyard, badge or card demonstrating that they are exempt.

Do I have to wear a face covering?

The benefit is greater when most people wear face coverings. By wearing a face covering, you are protecting other people who may be more vulnerable than you. If the majority of our University community wear a face covering, we are making the best effort possible to protect our friends, family, colleagues and the wider community. There may be specific reasons why an individual may be exempt from wearing a face covering but otherwise we are expecting that staff wear them as a health and safety issue.

From the 14th September 2020, it is a legal requirement to wear face coverings in indoor public places. This includes a very wide range of locations, such as shops and shopping centres, places of worship, hairdressers and salons, cinemas and museums, gyms and leisure centres, and anywhere that is open to members of the public. It would also include any public areas within buildings that are otherwise closed to the public – for example a reception area of an office building.

Exemptions

You may have an acceptable reason not to wear a face covering if (for example):

- You are not able to put on or wear a face covering because of a physical or mental illness, or because of a disability or impairment;

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- You are accompanying somebody who relies on lip reading where they need to communicate; or
- You are escaping from a threat or danger and don't have a face covering;
- You are undertaking exercise or an activity, and it would negatively impact your ability to do so;
- You are in own flat within our residences;
- You are undertaking agricultural activities within an agricultural building;
- You are delivering a sermon or prayer in a place of worship;
- You are in a single use office.

You may also have an acceptable reason to remove a face covering temporarily if (again, for example):

- You need to take medicines;
- You need to eat or drink, and this is permitted within the type of building you are in; or
- Asked to do so by staff for identification, such as for age identification purposes including when buying age restricted products such as alcohol
- You need to remove a face covering in order to avoid harm or injury, either to yourself or others – for example to get somebody's attention about a danger.

How can I show that I am not required to wear a face covering?

Whether somebody has an acceptable reason not to wear a face covering, it will not always be obvious. Disabilities and impairments are not always visible to others and respect and understanding should be shown to those who have good reasons not to wear face coverings.

We will provide a white lanyard for individuals to identify that they are exempt from wearing a face covering, should they wish to. Exemption lanyards will be available at the face covering collection points on request.

How to put on your face covering?

Hand hygiene either by washing hands or using the sanitisation stations at the entry of each building, should be performed before wearing or taking off a face covering. A face covering must only be handled by its straps. Inspect the face covering and do not use it if it is damaged or dirty.

- Placing the straps behind your ears, adjust the covering to your face, leaving no gaps on the sides.
- Avoid touching the covering while wearing it.
- Change your mask once it gets dirty or wet.
- To remove the covering, wash or sanitise your hands, remove using the strap behind your ears, without touching the front of the mask.
- As you remove the mask pull it away from your face, place in a re-sealable bag for re-use or to be laundered. Clean your hands by washing or sanitising at the stations provided.

[How to wear a fabric covering.](#)

How should I care for my reusable face covering?

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If you are using a reusable face covering, store it in a clean re-sealable bag until you can wash it. The face covering should be washed at least once a day. Wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions at the highest temperature appropriate for the fabric. You can use your normal detergent and you can wash and dry it with other laundry.

Do not share or give it to someone else to use; and you must dispose of your face covering if it is damaged.

Make sure you clean any surfaces the face covering has touched using normal household cleaning products.

How can I dispose of single use face covering responsibly?

Remove the face covering carefully – do not touch the front of the face covering or the part of which has been in contact with your mouth and nose.

If you aren't at home, place your face covering in a litter bin or take it home in a re-sealable bag and put it in your bin. Do not litter as it can damage the environment. If you are at home, put it in your household waste bin. Do not put single use face coverings in the recycling bin as they can't be recycled.

You do not need to put them in an extra bag or store them for a time before throwing them away.

Please remember to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser immediately after removing your face covering and throwing it away.

How will the requirement be enforced?

The University hopes that our community will understand the reasons for wearing face coverings and will do so maintaining our Community Promise. It is vital however that the new rules are explained to staff, students, contractors and visitors so that they have an opportunity to comply.

Information will be provided through the University website, signage, infomons and regular communications.

All staff have a role in explaining the requirements and ensuring that colleagues, students, contractors and visitors are expected to wear face coverings.

When asked, individuals will be given an opportunity to wear a face covering or explain why they have an acceptable reason not to wear a face covering. If they are unwilling to comply with our requirements, this guidance should be referenced to explain the University's position. We do expect staff to wear a face covering unless they are exempt.

Regular refusal to wear a face covering as detailed in this guidance, will result in further action being taken through staff or student disciplinary procedures; and/or refusal of entry to a University building or service provision for contractors, suppliers and visitors via the relevant procurement or service agreement.

Support and advice on these procedures is available from Academic Registry, Human Resources and Finance Department.

Police or environmental health officers can also issue a fixed penalty for breaches of these requirements. A first offence is punishable by a penalty of £60 (which doubles for each subsequent offence up to a maximum of

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£1,920). Repeat offenders could also be prosecuted in court where there is no limit to the fine that may be issued.

Additional sources of information

[Royal Society DELVE Initiative, Report on Face Masks for the General Public – An Update](#)

[Government Guidance to the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies](#)

<https://gov.wales/face-coverings-guidance-public>

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An EIA has been completed, if you have any queries regarding the EIA please contact divstaff@aber.ac.uk.