

**Access
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College**

Wearing a Face Covering in College Policy

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On Tuesday 25th August 2020, the Government issued guidance that the use of face coverings in corridors and break-out areas of schools and colleges would be mandatory in all areas with additional restrictive guidelines. This was updated on Monday 22nd February 2021 when the Government issued revised guidance recommending that from 8th March 2021 face masks be worn in all indoor settings including corridors, common areas, workshops and classrooms where social distancing cannot be maintained.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) usually spreads by droplets from coughs, sneezes and speaking. These droplets can also be picked up from surfaces, if you touch a surface and then your face without washing your hands first. This is why social distancing, regular hand hygiene, and covering coughs and sneezes is so important in controlling the spread of the virus.

The best available scientific evidence is that, when used correctly, wearing a face covering may reduce the spread of coronavirus droplets in certain circumstances, helping to protect others. Access Creative College has implemented robust COVID-19 secure plans at all our colleges and we are confident that the current measures we have followed are in line with all guidance. At all our sites, we will be relying on the compliance, common sense and cooperation of all students and staff to maintain social distancing where possible in all communal areas.

In order to do our best to keep staff and students safe and to comply with government guidance we will be implementing a policy of mandatory wearing of face coverings in **all inside settings** from **Monday 8th March**, the policy is outlined below and will be updated in line with any further government guidance.

When to wear a face covering:

1. Wearing a face covering will be mandatory for staff and students in all indoor areas of the college with the exception of staff offices only when other control measures (such as desk screens) are in place. Classrooms, rehearsal rooms, recording studios and enclosed practical spaces will all require the use of face coverings unless the activity dictates that this is not possible. In this case, additional control measures will be implemented.
2. Tutors will not be required to wear face masks when delivering sessions only when they are able to remain at the front of the classroom in the defined tutor area, a face covering must be worn if they are required to move around or when leaving the classroom.
3. Face coverings are not required in outdoor spaces, but staff and students should be mindful of keeping a 2 metre distance between yourself and someone not in your household or bubble. In Outdoor areas where you may have an extended period of close contact with an individual or group, i.e less than one metre, for example for the provision of treatment or first aid it is recommended that a face covering is worn.
4. Face coverings may be lowered to eat or drink whilst in a communal area. They must not be lowered to talk.
5. Face coverings do not have to be worn when exercising or doing physical activities even indoors.

Who must wear a face covering:

1. Everybody in the college premises should wear a face covering unless you are exempt for one of the following reasons:-:
 - you cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability;
 - where putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress;
 - if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate.
2. If you are exempt from wearing a face covering for one of the above reasons, this must be declared to your Learner Support Manager with written confirmation from your parent or guardian (for students) or your Line Manager (for staff).
3. Please always be mindful that not all disabilities are visible. No student is to approach another student or staff member about why they are not wearing a face covering. If you are concerned about someone's behaviour about these rules speak to a member of staff on site – do not try to deal with the situation yourself.
4. Staff in offices or on reception are not required to wear a face covering at their desk where protective screens are fitted, but they are required if screens are not in place or when moving around the site.
5. Visitors will be required to wear face coverings, these can be provided from Centre stock, the Estates Team will inform service providers and regular contractors of this requirement and all staff should make visitors aware before they arrive at site.
6. Staff working at Central Services in Manchester will be required to use face coverings where protective screens are not in place at their workstation, where they are using communal or shared areas, corridors, stairways and kitchen spaces or accessing meeting rooms or areas where it is not possible to maintain a 2 metre social distance.

What type of face covering to wear:

1. Face coverings must comply with Govt guidelines and must in all cases fully cover the nose and mouth securely. We strongly advise that staff and students use prescribed face coverings (either reusable or disposable) and you should not use coverings made from scarves, t-shirts etc. 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 Organisation 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.

2. Face coverings covering the neck, or eyes are not accepted. Any face covering showing foul or abusive language, harmful content or explicit content are banned.
3. In an instance where a face covering has not been brought to college by accident, the college will hold a small stock to give out.
4. Face visors or shields should not routinely be worn as an alternative to face coverings. They may protect against droplet spread in specific circumstances but are unlikely to be effective in preventing aerosol transmission, in an education setting they are unlikely to offer appropriate protection to the wearer and should only be used after carrying out a risk assessment for that specific situation.

How to use a face covering:

1. 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.

2. When removing a face covering, you should:

- 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.