



Appendix to WETNS Covid-19 Plan

Face Coverings 3rd – 6th Class Pupils

2nd December 2021

1. What is the change in primary schools in relation to the wearing of face coverings?

A decision was taken by Government on 30 November 2021, that face coverings should be worn by pupils in 3rd – 6th Class in primary schools.

2. How can I engage with the school to discuss any concerns I may have as a parent or if I wish to discuss an exemption?

We understand the difficulties that these changes may bring for pupils, parents, and staff at this time. We encourage and welcome Parents/Guardians to contact the school principal – Jenny (principal@wetns.ie) to discuss any queries or concerns that you may have in relation to face coverings or exemptions.

WETNS School staff will support the children to ensure that they can participate and communicate effectively in class whilst wearing the face coverings. We will continue to put the children's wellbeing at the centre of everything we do whilst implementing the current Public Health Measures.

We would ask all members of our school community, to be mindful that some children and adults present with *invisible* disabilities and additional needs, therefore you may not know this from meeting or interacting with a person.

As a school, we are aware of our own pupil's specific needs and will not be in a position to discuss exemptions for pupils with anyone other than the child's own parents/guardians. To support all in our community, we would ask everyone to show kindness and understanding to pupils, parents, and staff members at this time.

Waterford Educate Together National School

Paráid na bPáistí, Carrickphierish Road, Waterford. Tel: 051 355 714

e-mail: admin@wetns.ie Roll no. 20160K



3. When does this come into effect?

The requirement for the wearing of face coverings will be implemented at WETNS from Monday December 6th.

4. How long will this requirement last?

The information issued to schools from the Dept of Education states that the measure is a temporary measure and will be subject to review in mid-February 2022.

5. Who does the wearing of face coverings apply to?

The Dept of Education has advised that pupils in 3rd – 6th Classes should wear a face covering in school. However, there are some exemptions to this requirement as outlined in Question 6 below.

6. What are the exemptions to the wearing of face coverings?

The DE has set out three categories of exemptions to the requirement to wear a face covering. These include:

- 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.

7. How does the school get confirmation that a pupil falls into a category for exemption?

The vast majority of **exempted** children will not require medical certification to receive an exemption from wearing a face covering. The school will be familiar with the pupils needs and are well placed to identify those children whose complex needs mean the wearing of a face covering may not be possible. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact the school principal Jenny (principal@wetns.ie) to discuss any queries or concerns around exemptions.

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8. How often must the child wear the face covering during the day?

It is expected that children will wear the face covering for the duration of the full school day with the exceptions outlined below.

9. Can a face covering be removed for break time e.g. taking a drink, eating lunch?

A common-sense approach will apply at WETNS. The removal of face coverings for brief periods for the consumption of snacks, taking of water/beverages and post meal hygiene will be facilitated.

10. Can the mask be removed when the pupils go to the yard for play time?

Yes, the face covering can be removed for play time on the yard.

11. Can the mask be removed for P.E. or other sporting activities?

Yes. P.E. currently takes place outside so masks can be removed during this time.

12. Can the mask be removed for music e.g. singing?

Yes. A practical approach will be taken. Consideration will be given to the space available and the ventilation measures in place. Distance between the pupils will be maximised.

13. If a child forgets or damages his/her face covering will the school provide him/her with one?

Yes. The class teacher will supply a mask to a pupil who may forget or damage their face covering.

14. Should a pupil be assisted with his/her face covering?

It is expected that pupils from this age cohort (3rd class and above) should be able to put on and remove their own face coverings without assistance.

15. What are the directions for effective use of face masks/coverings?

Advice on how to use face coverings properly can be found at this link here: www.gov.ie - [When to wear face coverings and how to make them \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

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Important Advice:

- 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.
- Parents should be advised that they obtain face masks for their children which fit properly and are comfortable for the child to wear.

We thank all in our school community for your continued efforts to keep everyone safe during these difficult times.

WETNS Board of Management