



Writtle
University
College

WUC POLICY ON THE USE OF FACE COVERINGS IN A NON HEALTH CARE SETTING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Policy Owner	Department
H&S Officer	VCs Office
Version Number	Date drafted/Date of review
V2	13.07.20
Date Equality Impact Assessed	Has Prevent been considered (see Policies Guidance if unsure)
Yes	Yes
Reviewed and Approved by (see Policies Guidance for approval process)	Date
UCLG (Return to Campus Management Group)	19.08.20
Access (tick as appropriate)	
Public access (website) <input type="checkbox"/> And / Or Internal access (MyWi) <input type="checkbox"/>	Staff and Student access <input type="checkbox"/> Or Staff access only <input type="checkbox"/>

Policy Overview and Scope

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to implement as many measures as possible to safeguard WUC students and staff from exposure to the Covid 19 virus. The document recommends those areas where face coverings should be used.

The UK Government advises that people should wear a face covering in enclosed spaces where social distancing is not always possible and they come into contact with others that they do not normally meet. Face coverings are intended to protect against transmission of COVID-19 to others if you are infected without symptoms. They are not a replacement for social distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, high temperature, loss of taste or smell) you and your household must isolate at home. Wearing a face covering does not change this.

There may also be situations where students or staff, who may be suffering anxiety as a result of returning to studies or work, may wish to wear a face covering in order to feel more confident.

The WUC risk assessment should not rely on face coverings to protect employees and students against infection, but to continue to promote the Governments recommendations for the management of the risk of Covid infection by:

- Social distancing, 2m apart if possible otherwise the Governments current distancing recommendations;
- In order to reduce the risk of the number of people exposed to infection manage the number of people in the work area etc.
- Arrange work patterns to reduce the risk;
- Increase hand and surface washing;
- Work outside where possible or in a well ventilated environment.

Face coverings are not PPE as they do not protect the wearer from activity related hazards, but may protect others from the transmission of Covid, especially if the wearer is infected but has not developed symptoms. Whilst face coverings are not deemed as PPE, WUC still recognizes its duty to ensure the safety of students and staff during this pandemic.

Face coverings are not classed as PPE if they are not manufactured to a recognized standard and not CE marked, therefore, these masks will not have been tested for a proven level of protection from Covid 19 risks. Those masks CE marked are currently only available in health care settings.

Where recommendations are made to wear face coverings, if anyone has a medical condition or other reasons they are unable to wear them due consideration must be given to their request which should be made to line manager, tutor or WUC host.

Although the Government or scientific recommendations are not clear about the use of face coverings in non-health care settings any form of barrier, in addition to the social distancing, hand washing etc., may help to protect those in the medically vulnerable groups, especially with students this may allow them to feel included giving them equal opportunities during their studies at WUC.

Definition

Face Coverings

A face covering can be home made, a scarf or the surgical type face covering or a visor. A visor can be worn in conjunction with a face covering where social distancing cannot be achieved, however, current government guidance does not recommend their use as sole protection.

A face covering can be very simple and just needs to cover your mouth and nose. Importantly, a face covering is a precautionary measure and not the same as personal protective equipment (PPE),

It is important to use face coverings properly, please take the following steps:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water for 20 seconds, or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it.
- It is essential that your face covering covers your mouth and nose at all times; If you are wearing a surgical type face covering with a metal strip across the nose, then it needs to be gently pressed into the bridge of the nose;
- When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.
- Continue to wash your hands regularly.
- If the face covering becomes damp, change it;
- Change and wash your face covering daily.
- If you are wearing a visor (please see above), this can be wiped over in line with the manufacturers recommendations.
- If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in general waste. Do not litter or drop used coverings outside bins.
- If you take a covering off for use later, store it safely in a sealable plastic bag, such as those used for toiletries in airports. Do not leave on or in shared areas.

Other equipment

Nitrile or other protective gloves are not required for general use and are not recommended. Hand washing or sanitising remains the best personal hygiene measure to protect yourself.

Where you already use PPE in your work activity to protect against risks not related to COVID-19, you must continue to do so. Face coverings are not considered personal protective equipment (PPE) as explained by the HSE on their COVID-19 webpages.

For some activities, new forms of PPE may be required to protect against COVID-19, for example if working in a situation where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is high. This must be determined at a departmental level by reviewing activity risk assessments and identifying circumstances where people cannot maintain a 2 metre distance. If new PPE is required as determined by risk assessment, then this must be suitable for the activity, the individual and provided by WUC.

Scope

This document covers recommendations for students, staff, visitors and contractors on the WUC estate.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

WUC acknowledges that there may be good reasons why individuals are not able to wear a face covering.

This may include:

- if you have a physical or mental illness or impairment, or a disability that means you cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering
- if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering would cause you severe distress
- if you are with, or providing assistance to, someone who relies on lip reading to communicate
- if you need to eat, drink, or take medication

In these circumstances, pins must be worn and the focus must be on social distancing. If individuals have concerns, they should contact their line manager, the H&S Officer or HR Manager. In the event that you require a pin student should contact a member of the Wellbeing team and staff contact HR.

Face coverings may present additional challenges for people who are deaf or have another hearing impairment; people with a communication impairment; or people with Neuro divergence and cognitive impairments. These include preventing lip reading or seeing facial expressions. Where people need to communicate and are wearing a face covering, they should consider moving to a large, well ventilated area to stand or sit at least 2 metres apart. In addition, staff and students are encouraged to consider making or using face coverings with clear panels.

Policy and Procedure

Face coverings must be worn by all staff, students and visitors if you may come within 2 metres of another person when walking between buildings or around campuses. This applies when circulating around buildings, if there is the potential to come within 2 metres of another person, such as in narrow corridors and shared spaces like break areas and toilet facilities.

Where identified as a mandatory requirement for particular roles through risk assessment, WUC will provide PPE to staff, but everyone should aim to provide their own for general purposes.

Assuming you can work 2 metres from others, face coverings are not required in your working area and can be removed when you arrive at your workstation. For those working at reception desks, support or information points and areas of close interactions; you may need to keep face coverings on. Please contact your line manager if you are unsure. Local risk assessments may require specific equipment to be used and these must always be followed.

The following scenarios below are not exhaustive and as the science and Government recommendations and legislation change this Policy may be subject to amended to keep up date.

First Aid

Face covering (this could be the surgical type or visor) should be added to the first aid provisions. This will be of use where the first aider cannot provide care whilst maintaining the Government's current safe social distancing recommendations. Surgical type or visor face coverings should be included in the departmental first aid kits, each individual first aider must be responsible for their own face mask / visor which must not be shared; further recommended provisions will be available in the WUC First Aid Policy Covering the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Student and Staff Activities, including Office use

Student and staff activity risk assessments must also consider where there is a need to use face coverings in situations where it is not possible to adhere to the safe social distancing requirements. During the risk assessment process consideration must be given to ensure that the face covering does not introduce additional hazards to any operation e.g. steaming up whilst operating machinery.

In some offices, especially those which are poorly ventilated it would be advisable for face coverings to be worn. The line manager should discuss the use of face coverings with their staff.

Movement Around Buildings

Where possible the movement of large numbers of staff and students will be kept to a minimum, however, when students, staff and others are required to circulate within buildings they must wear face coverings. Once cohorts have assembled in an enclosed room then the member of staff will inform occupants of the requirement to wear face coverings in that environment. For persons who are in the clinically vulnerable groups then it would be advisable to follow their medical team's advice and / or wear the covering for extra protection.

Large Gatherings

Where students, staff or others involved with larger groups, which include persons outside of their normal cohort, then face coverings must be worn.

Travelling on Mini Bus

Students and staff driving or travelling on WUC mini buses must wear a face covering, failure to adhere may result in persons being refused entry on to the mini bus, whilst travelling on the mini bus persons must wear their face covering over their nose and mouth at all times.

Out of Hours Welfare Staff

Where possible these members of staff should be provided with face shields (visors) in order to present a more welcoming attendance to persons who may be suffering from anxiety, stress or mental issues.

Visitors

Where it is not possible to host meetings in a digital setting, then visitors should be required to wear face coverings when entering WUC buildings. It will be the responsibility of the host to determine whether or not a face covering is required from the findings of the risk assessment.

Contractors

When contractors are working on the WUC estate they should be asked for their Covid Secure Procedures and if they are entering buildings where students, staff or others are occupying the location they should be asked to wear face coverings.

Policy review

This policy will be kept under constant review and keep pace with government guidance wherever possible.

This policy supersedes any other policy and procedural guidelines, which may be in other existing University College documents. Writtle University College may amend this policy from time to time and any such amendments will be notified via the website, through Writtle Weekly or by email.

If this information is difficult to access, read or understand, it can be provided in another format, for example in Braille, in large print, on audiotape, in another language or by someone talking it through with you.

Version Control

Version Number	Purpose/Amendment	Date
0001	Draft face coverings policy to manage a Covid secure environment	July 2020
0002 Final	Draft face coverings policy to manage a Covid secure environment	Oct 2020