

## Do I need to wear a face covering on Newman University campus during August 2021?

This statement acknowledges that face coverings and social distancing are no longer a legal national requirement. However, in line with many other organisations and businesses, Newman University has certain requirements in place on campus, in order to keep everyone safe and to enable more vulnerable members of the Newman community to participate in their study or work in a safe way. This new statement was approved by the University's Leadership Team (ULT) and this update released on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021. We will review our position on a regular basis and we will trust and rely on staff, students and visitors to campus to work within this guidance<sup>1</sup>.

### Position during August 2021

1. People on the Newman University campus **are required to** wear a face covering:
  - when moving around campus and when seated closer than 2 metres from someone else.
2. People **should use their own judgement** whether or not to wear a face covering:
  - when seated 2 metres or more apart from someone else.
3. People **are not required to** wear face coverings:
  - outdoors
  - when eating or drinking
  - when in University accommodation if they are residents of that accommodation
  - if people are exempt
4. Everyone needs to be mindful of the needs of others and be prepared to make reasonable individual adjustments that may be important for or requested by others. This might involve wearing a face covering to make someone else feel safer, using a transparent face covering\*, or temporarily removing your face covering in order to aid communication.
5. If staff choose to wear a face covering in teaching sessions, it is recommended they wear a transparent face covering\* to enable clear communication to all.

\* N.B. Safety-wise the most effective face coverings are well-fitted, and prevent the dispersal of airborne particles, meaning a face-mask with a clear panel is the safest option. However, a full face visor / shield is acceptable in these circumstances as they are often considered to be more helpful to aid clear communication.

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<sup>1</sup> This statement also takes into account two areas of expectations that were already in existence prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, namely:

- (i) Employee expectations under the H&SAWA 1974 for employees to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of any other person who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- (ii) the University's ongoing commitment to equality and diversity.

Wearing a well-fitted face covering is a scientifically backed method of reducing the spread of COVID-19. The change in national restrictions means that it is more important than ever to protect others and wearing a face covering is one way to do this. There are many vulnerable people in the Newman community and the wearing of face coverings helps to enable vulnerable people to enjoy freedoms alongside others.

As the [government briefing confirmed on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021](#), infection rates are already rising rapidly and as national restrictions decrease, infection rates are expected to rise even more dramatically. The pandemic is not over and everyone must proceed in a cautious way. Continuing to give ourselves and others physical space and wearing face coverings is an important aspect of our journey forwards together.

Physical distancing, hand washing and respiratory hygiene are still the most important and effective measures we can all adopt to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Therefore, the wearing of face coverings must not be used as an alternative to any of these other precautions. If you have symptoms of Covid 19 (as defined by Public Health England: new, continuous cough, change or loss of smell and /or taste and/or high temperature) you and your household should [follow the NHS guidelines](#), self-isolate at home and [take a PCR test](#): wearing a face covering does not change this.

### **What is a face covering?**

A face covering is something which safely covers the nose and mouth. You can buy reusable or single-use face coverings. For environmental reasons Newman University encourages the use of reusable face coverings. You may also use a scarf, bandana, religious garment or hand-made cloth covering but these must securely fit round the side of the face.

### **Is a face covering personal protective equipment (PPE)?**

No a face covering is not PPE. PPE is very specific and is governed by H&S legislation. PPE includes surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare and other workers. PPE supplies should continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace, such as health and care workers and those in industrial settings like those exposed to dust hazards. Individual areas and teams are maintaining risk assessments, which are being reviewed by our Health and Safety Officer. If risk assessments indicate that PPE standard face masks are required, the University will provide these in a manner that is appropriate to that particular role or function within a role. If face coverings or visors become mandatory as identified by area risk assessments, these will be provided by the University. This process will take place through the University line management channels in consultation with H&S and Estates.

### **Being exempt from wearing a face covering on campus**

We recognise that everyone's circumstances will be different. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances, noting that some people are less able or not able to wear face coverings, and that the reasons for this may not be visible to others. Some individuals may wish to carry something (a sunflower lanyard or exemption card) to show others that they are not able to wear a face covering, however this is up to the individual and is not required.

The use of opaque face coverings (including masks, shields and other items such as scarves secured around the face) may increase communication difficulty for some staff and students, especially those who are deaf and hard of hearing, or with other disabilities. A clear mask may help. Information about different types of these can be found on the internet including on this website [www.which.co.uk/news/2020/12/clear-face-masks-what-to-know-before-you-buy/](http://www.which.co.uk/news/2020/12/clear-face-masks-what-to-know-before-you-buy/)

Safety-wise the most effective face coverings are well-fitted, and prevent the dispersal of airborne particles, meaning a face-mask with a clear panel is the safest option. However, a full face visor /

shield is acceptable in these circumstances as they are often considered to be more helpful to aid clear communication.

Please be aware that not everyone will understand you while wearing a face covering. It is important to consult and 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, or writing with pen and paper. We encourage students and staff to remain aware of these different ways of communicating.

There may be instances for safety or security requirements that will mean the individual is asked to remove face coverings for identification purposes. Such requests should be undertaken in a well-ventilated location, observe good hygiene practices and maintain adequate social distancing. Please note the following related aspects of the [University General Academic Regulations](#): E13.9 (expected conduct for exams) and B7.8 (identification cards).

### **Do's and Don'ts when wearing Face Coverings**

- DO wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it
- DO limit how much you touch your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands
- DO change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
- DO continue to wash your hands regularly
- DO change and wash your face covering daily, washing re-usable ones in line with manufacturers' instructions or disposing of one-use only face covering in your usual waste
- DO remember Covid-19 travels in air particles and practise social distancing wherever possible.

### **Face covering FAQs**

Q1: I travel to work or study on public transport, will the University therefore supply me with a face covering for me to go on public transport if the use of a face covering is mandatory?

A: No, this is the responsibility of the individual to provide their own face covering.

Q2: I am deaf or hard of hearing and I lip-read – what do I do if a member of staff or students in my group wear face coverings?

A: We inform people about how face coverings can limit communication. If staff choose to wear a face covering in teaching sessions, it is recommended they wear a transparent face covering to enable clear communication to all. Tell the staff or student/s if you find the communication unclear (whether or not their face covering is transparent. They need to consider moving further away to create social distance and then remove their face covering when speaking. If that is not practical, the University will put alternative methods in place (e.g. notetaking) so that no student is disadvantaged.

Q3. Do I have to buy face coverings or can I make my own?

A. You are welcome to make your own –here are some useful links to show how to make them. The government website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>

The BBC news website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52609777>