The Use of Face Coverings

The University and Colleges have issued a joint statement on the use of face coverings (29/07/20).

You can read the full statement here.


The joint statement recognises that each college is different and might have stricter rules on the use of face covering.

Churchill College has taken the position that people entering the college buildings are required to wear face coverings in all indoor communal spaces. Staff and College Members may also choose to wear a face covering when moving around the College site out of doors, but this is no longer mandatory.

A face covering is something which securely covers the nose and mouth. Cloth face and disposable face coverings work best if they are made with multiple layers (at least 2) and form a good fit around your face. Face coverings should be made of a material that you find comfortable and breathable. Face coverings are not classed as personal protective equipment PPE.

Government advice makes clear that while wearing a face covering will not protect you from COVID19, there is evidence to suggest it may protect others if you are infected but not showing symptoms. Their use is mentioned in the Government’s COVID-19 secure guidelines for workplaces, and there is evidence that they can contribute to mitigation measures in returning staff to work.

The use of face coverings does not lessen the need for social distancing, effective handwashing and good hygiene practices, and other mitigating actions for reducing both transmission and personal exposure to COVID-19.

When would I not be expected to wear a face covering inside a College building?

Examples include:

- Eating or drinking while socially distanced from others – at a distance of one metre
- When working in a lone office
- When lip-reading is required – and social distancing can be maintained.
- In a shared office with good ventilation, 2m social distancing or a physical barrier like a Perspex screen, with a suitable risk assessment and consultation. Finally all occupants must agree to no face coverings.

Are there any exemptions to this statement?

You do not need to wear a face covering if you have any of the following:

- Pre-existing breathing difficulties and/or other respiratory conditions not related to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection
• Mental-health conditions such as anxiety or panic disorders exacerbated by wearing a face covering
• Non-visible disabilities that would be exacerbated by wearing a face covering
• Visual impairments, with a restricted field of vision, particularly if any residual vision is at the lower edge of the normal field of view
• Impairments that would make it difficult to put on or take off a face covering safely, accurately, consistently or without pain

If one of the above exemptions applies, staff should inform their Head of Department.

It is critically important when using a face covering that meticulous hygiene is followed as there is a risk that poor hygiene, particularly hand hygiene will negate the positive impact of the face covering.

The correct method to apply a face covering is;

1. Wash or sanitise hands
2. Apply face covering using only the ear loops
3. Do not adjust, or otherwise touch the face covering once applied.
4. Before removal wash or sanitize hands.
5. Remove touching only the ear loops.
6. Store in a separate plastic bag.

Further guidance on the use of face covering is available here:

https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/stay-safe-cambridge-uni/wear-a-face-covering

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