

# POLICY ON FACE COVERINGS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND THIRD PARTIES

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## 1 Introduction

From 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020, wearing a face covering is required on all University of Law campuses and in classrooms in our partner campuses.\*

Further to the latest government announcement, from 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021 wearing a face covering is still required for all students, staff and visitors at all times on all University of Law campuses and in classrooms in our partner campuses.\* This is out of respect for each other and to reduce transmission, given the high level of cases and consideration for individuals who have not had the opportunity yet to be double-vaccinated. We will review this measure again at the start of September ahead of the autumn academic term.

Work and study – you will be required to put on a face covering before entering campus and must keep the face covering on until you leave\*

For our students and staff who attend partner campuses (Exeter, Liverpool, Norwich, Reading and Sheffield), please note that *outside of the classroom*, you will need to refer to the policies of the host campus.

\*unless you are exempt, please see section 4

## 2 The reason for using face coverings

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. Because face coverings are mainly intended to protect others, not the

wearer, from coronavirus (COVID-19) they are an additional measure and not a replacement to the system of control measures we operate. These include social distancing, high standards of hand hygiene, increased cleaning and/or other measures introduced which form part of ULaw's Covid-19 Management Control Procedures and Risk Assessment.

If you have recent onset of any of the most important symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), as shown below, you and your household must isolate at home - wearing a face covering does not change this. You should [arrange to have a test to see if you have COVID-19](#).

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of smell or taste (anosmia)
- any symptoms that are different from how you feel on a normal day

### 3 When you can remove a face covering

You can remove your face covering in order to eat and drink but must put a face covering back on once you have finished.

Using a phone/headset does not mean that you can remove your face covering, there will still be people within proximity to you.

If you occupy a one-person office, once inside you can remove your face covering, but you must put your face covering back on once you leave the office. This includes using washrooms facilities, printers etc. and if a student or staff member attends your office.

### 4 When you do not need to wear a face covering (general)

There are some circumstances, for health, age or equality reasons, where people are not required to wear face coverings. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances, noting that some people are less able to wear face coverings and that the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

This includes (but is not limited to) the descriptors contained in this link:- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

For ULaw, the most relevant exemptions are:-

- not being able to put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
- if you are travelling with or providing assistance to someone who relies on

- lip reading to communicate
- to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others
- in order to take medication
- if speaking with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound. You may be asked, either verbally or in writing, to remove a covering to help with communication

### **Exemption Cards**

Some people may feel more comfortable showing something that says they do not have to wear a face covering. This could be in the form of an exemption card, badge or even a home-made sign.

You do not have to provide a verbal explanation should you feel uncomfortable doing so; it is sufficient to show your exemption card without an explanation or providing a background reason detailing any medical, social or other need for your exemption.

If a member of staff or a student does not wear a face covering whilst in campus, it should be accepted that this individual has a legitimate and valid reason not to do so (see above). In this circumstance it is appropriate to enquire whether the individual is exempt and, if they are not, to request that they put on a face covering or leave the site immediately (see paragraph 9).

### **Students**

If you believe you are exempt from wearing a face covering, please contact the Disability Support and Inclusion Service by email at [disabilitysupportservice@law.ac.uk](mailto:disabilitysupportservice@law.ac.uk), to inform them. They will then issue an exemption card.

### **Staff**

If you believe you are exempt from wearing a face covering, please contact your local HR Business Partner to inform them of this and for them to arrange the provision of an exemption card.

These steps will enable us to support the most vulnerable members of the university community effectively. Any disclosure of exemption will be treated sensitively and the information will only be shared for operational purposes.

## **5 When you do not need to wear a face covering (teaching only)**

Tutors will wear transparent face coverings when teaching to aid communication and allow for peoples' need for lip/facial expression reading.

It is strongly recommended that tutors continue to wear transparent face coverings in the classroom as an additional measure in reducing the spread of COVID-19 while assisting with communication with people who rely on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate. Face coverings (whether transparent or cloth) should fit

securely around the face to cover the nose and mouth and are made with a breathable material capable of filtering airborne particles. For tutors who are unable to wear a face mask, then face visors can be worn through personal choice but tutors are advised they are not an equivalent alternative to face coverings in terms of source control of virus transmission. If you wish to wear a visor rather than a transparent face covering then you may choose to do so. Tutors can either remain at the front of the classroom within the demarcated area or they can choose to go beyond the line into the class should they wish to.

Students must wear face coverings at all times (subject to point 4 above). Students who are not wearing a face covering and are not registered as exempt will be asked to put one on (see 9 below). Individuals who are not registered as having a legitimate exemption and who refuse to wear a face covering will be asked to leave the classroom or area in which they are currently situated (for example, the library or breakout areas), and may be ultimately asked to leave campus. Repeated instances of refusal to wear a face covering could ultimately result in access to campus being restricted or suspended until the student agrees to comply with this policy.

The University's Disability Support and Inclusion service has updated the student's University of Law Inclusion Plan (ULIPs) to reflect face covering exemptions and where students are hearing-impaired. Any students who have a face covering exemption will appear on the weekly tutor lists with the note "COVID: FACE COVERING EXEMPT." If you have any questions please contact [disabilitysupportservice@law.ac.uk](mailto:disabilitysupportservice@law.ac.uk)

## 6 When you do not need to wear a face covering (external areas on campus)

Face coverings may be removed when outside on university grounds, such as courtyards, car parks and open grounds, ensuring that adherence to Government-led social distancing requirements are observed. Where social distancing is not possible, a face covering must worn (unless you are exempt).

## 7 Provision of face coverings

Stocks of face coverings will be available on all campuses, or individuals may choose to bring their own.

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

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 have touched it

## 8 Maintaining and disposing of face coverings

Do not touch the front of the face covering, or the part of the face covering that has been in contact with your mouth and nose.

Once removed, store reusable face coverings in a plastic bag until you have an opportunity to wash them.

If the face covering is single use, dispose of it in a residual waste bin. Do not put them in a recycling bin.

Wash your face covering regularly and follow the washing instructions for the fabric. You can use your normal detergent. You can wash and dry it with other laundry. You must throw away your face covering if it is damaged.

## 9 Collective responsibilities

Thank you for reading and following the required actions in this document. We are committed to keeping all of our students, staff and visitors safe and hope that these extra measures provide another layer of reassurance. It is the collective responsibility of the entire university community to ensure we are taking the necessary precautions to maintain a safe and secure working and learning environment. With that in mind, please be reminded that unless you have a legitimate exemption from wearing a face covering, as outlined in paragraphs 4 and 5, you are required to wear one whilst you are on campus.

If you are not wearing a face covering, or carrying an exemption card, our staff may ask you to use a face covering or remove yourself from the classroom or other settings. This may include having to leave the campus site in its entirety, if you do not appear to comply with the request.

We expect that any dialogue regarding the use of face coverings is civil, productive and in the spirit of a university community working to protect one another. Any aggressive language or behaviour, from any individual, in relation to the wearing of face coverings will be dealt with seriously through the appropriate disciplinary regulations and policies.

The University is undertaking the following measures to ensure our campuses are a safe environment:

- Staff/Students have been advised not to attend events scheduled to take place on

campus if they are ill/show symptoms of COVID-19

- Enhanced cleaning of campuses
- Sanitiser stations
- Temperature checks prior to all entering University buildings
- Social distancing measures (2m, and 1m+ in classrooms)
- Classrooms set up to ensure social distancing can be achieved (reduced capacity, exam style layout, forward facing)
- Socially distanced bookable study areas
- Mandatory face coverings in all campus buildings
- Adequate ventilation to ensure free flow of air

## 10 Review of the policy

As the situation changes in line with current events, government guidance and the appropriateness of any additional steps or changes needed to reflect the University's own individual circumstances, this policy will also be reviewed to ensure currency. Staff and students will be made aware of any major changes and the way these changes may affect them.