

## Where local restrictions apply

Consistent with WHO's new advice, schools and colleges should take additional precautionary measures in areas where the transmission of the virus is defined as either high or very high under the [local COVID alert level framework](#). Information on the local COVID alert level can be found in the [full list of local COVID alert levels by area](#) guidance.

When an area moves to the local COVID alert level 'high' or 'very high', in education settings where year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults (staff and visitors) and pupils when moving around indoors, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain. As in the general approach, it will not usually be necessary to wear face coverings in the classroom, where protective measures already mean the risks are lower, and they may inhibit teaching and learning.

When an area moves to the local COVID alert level 'high' or 'very high', schools and colleges will need to communicate quickly and clearly to staff, parents, pupils and learners that the new arrangements require the use of face coverings in certain circumstances.

## Access to face coverings

It is reasonable to assume that staff and young people will now have access to face coverings due to their increasing use in wider society, and Public Health England has made available resources on how to [make a simple face covering](#).

However, where anybody is struggling to access a face covering, or where they are unable to use their face covering due to having forgotten it or it having become soiled or unsafe, education settings should take steps to have a small contingency supply available to meet such needs.

No-one should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering.

## Exemptions

Some individuals are [exempt from wearing face coverings](#). For example people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability, or if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate. The same exemptions will apply in education settings, and we would expect teachers and other staff to be sensitive to those needs.