

Face coverings at St Catharine's College

December 2021

With the emergence of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, the Government is revising public health guidance and has extended the use of face coverings in settings where they had not recently been required.

The College expects face coverings to be worn by students, staff, Fellows and all visitors to the St Catharine's properties when using indoor shared facilities (including libraries and meeting rooms) and when moving through corridors and across indoor communal spaces. They are not required when outdoors nor if a person is exempt from wearing a face covering as outlined in the recommendations below.

Members of the College community and visitors are therefore asked to carry a face covering with them at all times so they are prepared if they need to enter indoor communal spaces and shared facilities.

Other precautions will be maintained and, where appropriate, these will be indicated on local signage (e.g. outside and inside meeting rooms). Most notably, social distancing of at least 1 metre will be encouraged to limit close contact with people you do not usually live with, and ventilation arrangements will be in place to reduce the possibility of COVID-19 being transmitted. Where these other precautions are **all** possible, at their discretion, Heads of Department may authorise groups using a shared space for which they are responsible to do so without face coverings.

The College fully expects to review this policy and, if necessary, expand how it affects in-person teaching at our properties.

About this policy

Which shared indoor facilities does this policy cover?

As part of a range of precautions, face coverings are expected when **moving about** the following shared spaces, unless an exemption applies:

- The Catzebo
- The Bar
- The Lower Octagon (gym)
- The Boathouse
- The Sports Pavilion
- The Sports Courts

Additionally, face coverings are expected when **seated AND moving about** the following spaces, unless an exemption applies:

- The Shakeshaft Library
- The Ramsden Room
- The McGrath Centre
- The Rushmore Room
- The Upper Octagon (study space)
- Computer rooms
- The Chapel
- Shared offices
- Corridors and foyers
- The JCR
- The MCR
- The MCR locker room

Individuals gathering for larger events in any of these spaces or special services in the Chapel (such as weddings) will be expected to follow instructions specific to these circumstances.

Are there any exemptions?

In line with [Government advice](#), you are not required to wear a face covering in some circumstances. Please note, if someone is not wearing a mask, it may be for one of the exempt reasons which may not be obvious.

The College recognises that there are also a number of circumstances when it is not feasible for anyone to wear a face covering, **including exercise, singing/preaching in Chapel and the consumption of food and drink.**

In addition, students **are not required** to wear face coverings when they are in their households with other students also living in that household, unless they wish to.

If you are ever unsure whether a face covering would be expected before entering an indoor space, please wear a face covering. This is also a courtesy to others, particularly when entering another person's office or household.

About face coverings

What is a face covering?

Face coverings help protect the wearer and others against the spread of infection because they cover the nose and mouth, which are the main confirmed sources of COVID-19 transmission.

It can be a reusable cloth or a single-use disposable covering that must cover the nose, chin and side of the face, with no gaps. While reusable options are more environmentally responsible, single-use disposable coverings are available free of charge from the Island site (Porters' Lodge, MCR, Shakeshaft Library, Catzebo and entrance to the Bar), St Chad's (Porters' Lodge), Russell Street (main entrance) and Sports Ground (Squash Court) for anyone who arrives at these sites without a face covering.

How to wear a face covering

A face covering should securely cover both the nose and mouth. The St Catharine's community is expected to follow the [latest government advice](#) on safely wearing face coverings.

What to do with a used face covering

Once you've taken a face covering off, it should be treated as though it is contaminated:

- Do **not** place it on surfaces such as table tops.
- Do **not** touch areas of the covering that have been in contact with your nose or mouth.
- Single-use face coverings should be disposed of in a waste bin (unfortunately not recycling).
- Re-usable face covering should be stored until it can be washed – please carry a bag with you that you can put the face covering safely away.
- Re-usable face coverings should be washed between uses – this can be done with other laundry.