



Hollinsclough CE Academy

Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE)

Advice and Guidance Document for RPE users

The following sections detail the different types of available RPE, by referencing the Health & Safety Executive guidance document, *HSG53 Respiratory Protective Equipment*, you can find out further guidance on which RPE is appropriate our school. You may find you have more than one adequate and suitable option; in that situation, the choice is yours. Involving the wearer will help you select the most appropriate RPE.

Each RPE type detailed below has photographs to illustrate its typical appearance. Individual models from various manufacturers may differ in style and detail. However, remember, you can also use equipment that provides higher protection than the minimum you need.

RPE Mask types

Surgical Mask



behind your head.

The surgical mask, European standard EN 14683:2019 or equivalent surgical masks are disposable, loose-fitting facemasks that cover your nose, mouth, and chin. They are typically used to protect the wearer from sprays, splashes, and large-particle droplets, which also helps, prevent the spread of potentially infectious respiratory secretions from the wearer to others. Surgical masks can vary in design, but the mask itself is often flat and rectangular in shape with pleats or folds. The top of the mask contains a metal strip that can be formed to your nose. Elastic bands or long, straight ties help hold a surgical mask in place while you're wearing it. These can either be looped behind your ears or tied

Fitting a surgical facemask

Wear your mask and wear it correctly to stay healthy!

- Secure ties at the middle of the head and neck, according to manufacturer's instructions
- Fit the flexible band to your nose ridge by pressing gently

Surgical masks cannot protect against infection with COVID-19. Not only does the mask not filter out smaller aerosol particles, but air leakage also occurs through the sides of the mask as you inhale.

Disposable facemasks

The FFP respirator (also referred to as N95) is generally circular or oval in shape and is designed to form a tight seal to your face. Elastic bands help hold it firmly in place. Some types may have an attachment called an exhalation valve, which can help with breathing and the build-up of heat and humidity.

Respirators are not one-size-fits-all; they must be face-fit-tested before use to make sure that a proper seal is formed. If the mask does not seal effectively to your face, you will not receive the appropriate protection.

After being fit-tested, users of FFP respirators must continue to perform a seal check each time they put one on. It is also important to note that a tight seal cannot be achieved in some groups. These include children and people with facial hair. Avoid touching the front of the mask or respirator. If wearing a facemask, unfasten the bottom ties, then those at the top. Pull the mask or respirator away from the face without touching the front.

Filtering Face Piece (FFP) Protection Classes

This classifying system consists of three levels: FFP1, FFP2 and FFP3. A filtering facepiece will be categorised and marked according to the level of protection it provides, FFP1 being the 'least' protective and FFP3 being the 'most'.

FFP1 respirator



FFP1 facemasks give the minimum level of protection against non-toxic particulates. Dependent on the hazard, this standard of the mask can be completely capable.

FFP1 masks contain the least amount of filter material so provide the least breathing resistance. An exhalation valve is often not required.

FFP1 masks can protect against brick dust, cellulose, cement, coal dust, gypsum, limestone, Plaster of Paris, pollen and sugar. This type of mask should filter a minimum of 75% of the substance.

These substances are not toxic or fibrogenic but can cause irritation in the airways with adverse long-term effects.

FFP1 masks should not be used for materials outside of those listed above, and higher protection should be used in poisonous, toxic or more hazardous environments.

These masks will be rated an APF of 4x OEL.

FFP2 respirator



FFP2 facemasks offer a moderate level of protection against hazardous mists, particulates and fumes.

Exhalation valves are more common in FFP2 masks as there is greater breathing resistance. Exhalation valves also help to reduce the build-up of heat inside the mask, improving the comfort for the wearer.

FFP2 masks protect against brake dust, cotton dust, granite dust, hay, lead dust and fume and softwood dust.

FFP2 respirator masks are made for working environments in which deleterious and mutagenic particles can be found in the breathing air. They are most commonly used in the metal and mining industry. Without conformant, facemasks, workers exposed to the above hazards can develop lung cancer and Tuberculosis (TB).

These masks will be rated an APF of 10x OEL.

FFP 3 respirator



FFP3 masks provide the highest level of protection that a disposable mask can offer.

A well-fitting FFP3 mask can protect users against fine toxic particulates including asbestos, bacteria, viruses and radioactive particles.

The filter material for this standard is so thick that an exhalation valve is almost always fitted.

FFP3 masks are often used in the chemical industry due to the usage of contaminants and hazardous materials.

These masks will be rated and APF of 20x OEL.

The HSE recommends the use of FFP3 respirators when caring for patients in areas where high-risk aerosol-generating procedures (AGPs) are being performed.

When FFP3 respirators are not available, then FFP2 respirators may be used.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends FFP2, and N95 respirators for AGPs and these are widely used in other countries.

The N95 respirator is not CE marked but has been tested against standards similar to European standards.

The selection of appropriate PPE will be determined by our risk assessment and reference to Public Health England guidance. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/face-mask-equivalence-apronsgowns-eye-protection-coronavirus.htm>

Important Notes to Consider

As more people return to work, there will be more movement outside people's immediate household.

The increased mobility means the Government is now advising that people should aim to **wear a face-covering in enclosed spaces** where social distancing is not always possible, and they come into contact with others that they do not normally meet, for example on public transport or in some shops.

Homemade cloth face-coverings can help reduce the risk of transmission in some circumstances. Face-coverings are not intended to help the wearer, but to reduce the potential for inadvertent transmission of the disease to others if you have it asymptotically.

A face covering is not the same as a facemask such as the surgical masks or respirators used as part of personal protective equipment by healthcare and other workers. These supplies must continue to be reserved for those who need it.

Face-coverings should not be used by children under the age of two, or those who may find it difficult to manage them correctly, for example, primary age children unassisted, or those with respiratory conditions. It is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off".

We have purchased FFP3 Facemasks for staff to use so if required by individual preference of in line with the Risk Assessment. In addition, we have also purchased surgical masks for children to wear, i.e. during first aid or if they are awaiting collection by a parent due to illness.