



Virtual School Sensory Support

Audiology and Covid 19 - Advice for schools for staff wearing face coverings

This document has been created in preparation for some children returning to school. It will be updated as the situation evolves, and more information comes to light. We are mindful that certain measures necessary during the pandemic may impact access to the curriculum for pupils who are deaf, and we wish to support them and you with mitigating this.

Face coverings are a challenge for children and young people who are deaf as they can:

- Obstruct access to lip-reading and gesture
- Distort speech
- Make speech unintelligible

Whilst we are concerned about the communication challenges that face coverings present for our children and young people who are deaf; we also respect that people may choose, or be advised, to wear them for their own protection or for the protection of others.

For those staff wearing face coverings, if possible, wear surgical masks made from a **transparent material** that allows the mouth to be seen or **transparent face shields**, but be aware that your voice will still be distorted.

When wearing a face covering, a talker needs to take extra care in their speech production (regardless of the level of deafness of the listener). 'Extra care' includes a range of factors detailed below:

1. Seat pupils who are deaf at the front of the room, ideally as close to you as socially distancing permits.
2. Face pupils who are deaf when speaking to them.
3. Reduce the background noise as much as possible.
4. Make sure you have the attention of the pupils who are deaf before beginning to speak.
5. Talk slowly, but do not shout, over-emphasise or exaggerate your words.
6. Ensure only one person speaks at a time.
7. Allow time for processing information.
8. Check comprehension with open questions.
9. Repeat/rephrase remarks if not understood.
10. Ensure any hearing devices are being worn and are working.
11. If applicable/possible make use of radio aids.
12. If feasible, consider live captioning, so that what you say is displayed on the board/screen, or on a device on the CYP's desk.

For further support and guidance please contact your Teacher of the Deaf.