



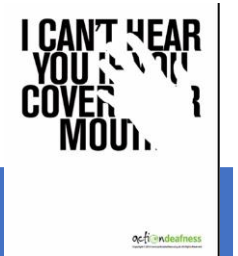
# Impact of Face Mask Use for Deaf Learners- March 2021

The government has strengthened the guidance on the use of facemasks in education settings for March 2021. Everybody's health and safety is of paramount importance, but we also need to consider the impact of the use of face masks on deaf learners both on well-being and access to learning. Education settings are legally required to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that no child or young person is disadvantaged.

Please consider the points below and if necessary, discuss with a Teacher of the Deaf.

It is important to stress that the use of facemasks is **only recommended** where a 2-metre social distance cannot be maintained. Staff providing support to others needing visual signals for communication are currently exempt. More information can be found on the updated [government guidance](#) pages 5-7.

Not all deaf children and young people are the same. Talk to them and/or their family regularly about how mask use impacts them and what is helpful to them.



Impact of face masks	Reasonable Adjustments		
<b>Listening becomes harder and requires more effort</b>	Keep background noise to a minimum	Enforce a 'one person speaks at a time' rule	Sit the student near the front of the class.
<b>Face masks muffle and distort sounds</b>	Use additional technology such as a radio aid or soundfield system effectively	Face the student when talking. Ensure you have their attention before speaking	Provide key points or vocabulary before the lesson where possible
<b>More likely to miss out on key information</b>	Display new vocabulary, key information and task instructions on the board	Repeat contributions from peers	Discretely ask open questions to check the student's understanding
<b>Unable to lip read and see facial clues</b>	Wear a clear mask if possible or use a Perspex screen	Use visuals, objects and modelling to support what you're saying	Remove mask if safe to do so and necessary
<b>Feelings of isolation and anxiety</b>	Appoint a buddy to check in with the student	Provide a quieter place for the student and their friends to access at lunch time	Some students may be exempt from wearing a mask- make staff aware of who, they may wish to carry their own card