

GUIDANCE FOR THE USE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT IN EDUCATION SETTINGS

The Department has secured an initial supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) for use in education settings. As there is a critical need to conserve these resources, schools should note the indications for use as outlined in the [physical distancing guide](#) and details provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1: APPROPRIATE USE OF PPE FOR STAFF CARING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE DISPLAYING SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 AND ARE AWAITING COLLECTION BY A PARENT/CARER

	 Hand hygiene	 Surgical mask	 N95/P2 mask	 Eye protection	 Gloves	 Fluid resistant gown/coveralls or plastic apron
An unwell staff member, child or young person	YES	YES*	NO	NO	NO	NO
A staff member providing non-contact supervision for an unwell child or young person	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
A staff member providing close contact supervision or care (cannot maintain physical distance of >1.5m) for an unwell child or young person.	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
In the context of schools supporting children with complex health needs, a staff member providing close contact supervision or care [^] (cannot maintain physical distance of >1.5m) AND supervision or care is to be prolonged for an unwell child or young person.	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES

* See 'Use of face masks' to guide appropriate use of masks for unwell staff, children and young people

[^] Includes where there is deliberate spitting/coughing on staff

The initial supply for PPE procured for use in education settings includes the following items, noting that some settings will have existing supplies and/or acquired their own supply that may differ from the items listed below:

- Disposable mask
- Disposable gloves
- Reusable goggles
- Disposable coveralls

This document provides guidance to education staff on the required precautions and correct use of this equipment.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

It is important that staff are mindful of their own health and wellbeing when using PPE.
Staff should remember to hydrate themselves prior to putting on and after removing PPE.
Staff must practice hand hygiene and avoid touching their faces.¹

Principles for putting on (donning) PPE

The sequence for donning PPE is as follows:

1. Hand hygiene
2. Gown*
3. Mask
4. Protective eyewear
5. Gloves

Detailed instructions are available from DHHS - [How to put on \(don\) and take off \(doff\) your PPE](#)

**The initial supply of PPE includes coveralls to be used in place of a gown (unless a gown is available)*

Principles for taking off (doffing) PPE

PPE should be removed in an order that minimises the potential for cross contamination. The sequence for doffing PPE is as follows:

<i>When using a gown</i>	<i>When using coveralls*</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gown and gloves 2. Protective eyewear 3. Mask 4. Hand hygiene 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gloves 2. Hand hygiene 3. Coveralls (also see 'Use of coveralls') 4. Hand hygiene 5. Mask 6. Hand hygiene

Detailed instructions are available from DHHS - [How to put on \(don\) and take off \(doff\) your PPE](#)

**The initial supply of PPE includes coveralls to be used in place of a gown (unless a gown is available)*

¹ DHHS. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Case and contact management guidelines for health services and general practitioners 14 April 2020 Version 18

HAND HYGIENE

Hand washing with soap and water is the most effective preventative measure against community transmission of COVID-19. If hand washing facilities are not available or accessible, the use of an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with at least 60 per cent alcohol is an appropriate alternative.²

Detailed instructions on hand washing are available from DHHS - [Wash your hands regularly - poster](#)

USE OF GLOVES

Hand hygiene should be performed prior to donning gloves and after gloves are removed.

Gloves must be changed between patients and after every episode of individual care.³

Staff who are sensitive to latex should ensure that they wear non-latex gloves.⁴

USE OF EYE PROTECTION

For protection against sprays, splashes and respiratory droplets, goggles should be used.

Personal eyeglasses and contact lenses are not considered adequate eye protection.

Protective eyewear should be cleaned and disinfected according to the manufacturer's instructions, generally with detergent solution, dried then wiped over with a disinfectant (for example, > 70% alcohol) and be completely dry before being stored.⁵

USE OF FACE MASKS

Surgical masks are loose fitting, single-use items that cover the nose and mouth. They are used as part of standard precautions to keep splashes or sprays from reaching the mouth and nose of the person wearing them. They also provide some protection from respiratory secretions and are worn when caring for patients on droplet precautions.⁶

When putting on a single-use surgical mask shape the metal clip over the nose and ensure the bottom of the mask fits snugly underneath the chin. Children should wear a child mask appropriate to their size.⁷

Consider the following when using a surgical mask:

- masks should be changed between patients and when they become soiled or wet
- masks should never be reapplied after they have been removed
- masks should not be left dangling around the neck
- touching the front of the mask while wearing it should be avoided
- hand hygiene should be performed upon touching or discarding a used mask.⁸

² Emergency Management Victoria. Guidance on the rationale use of personal protective equipment for COVID-19 in non-health services.

³ Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2019). <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-guidelines-prevention-and-control-infection-healthcare-2019>

⁴ DHHS. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Case and contact management guidelines for health services and general practitioners 14 April 2020 Version 18

⁵ Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2019). <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-guidelines-prevention-and-control-infection-healthcare-2019>

⁶ Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2019). <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-guidelines-prevention-and-control-infection-healthcare-2019>

⁷ Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2019). <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-guidelines-prevention-and-control-infection-healthcare-2019>

⁸ Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2019). <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-guidelines-prevention-and-control-infection-healthcare-2019>

Face masks should not be used in situations where an individual is unable to safely or practically tolerate a mask. For example:

- A child or young person with an underlying health condition, including but not limited to respiratory conditions.
- A child or young person who is resistant to wearing a mask (either due to developmental or behavioural challenges). In this situation it is better for the staff member to wear a mask (where available) while maintaining distance and good hand hygiene.

Some schools may receive a supply of P1 respirator masks in addition to surgical masks. Figure 1 illustrates the difference between these types. Wherever possible a surgical mask should be used. When a surgical mask is unavailable, a P1 mask can be used for a short period. However, as P1 masks have not been designed for fluid resistance they should be disposed of immediately if they are splattered on (for example, if a student were to cough during the provision of direct care). P1 masks should not be worn by individuals with underlying respiratory conditions or used for children.

FIGURE 1: APPEARANCE OF A P1 MASK VERSUS A SURGICAL MASK



In the event that a school has existing supplies of P2/N95 respirator masks, please note that these are not indicated for use in education settings (refer to Table 1). If using a P2/N95 respirator, always refer to the manufacturers' instructions for fit and check specifications to ensure fluid resistance.

USE OF COVERALLS

The initial procurement of PPE for education settings includes coveralls to be used in place of gowns.

The process for donning coveralls is as follows:

- Step into the coveralls.
- Pull up over waist.
- Insert arms into sleeve, if thumb hoops available then hoop these over your thumbs, ensure sleeves cover end of gloves to no skin if visible.
- Pull up over shoulders.
- Fasten zip all the way to the top.
- Do not apply the hood of the coverall as there is no requirement for airborne or droplet transmission.⁹

Also see – Public Health England [Putting on \(donning\) personal protective equipment \(PPE\) including coveralls for aerosol generating procedures \(AGPs\)](#)

The process for doffing coveralls is as follows:

- Tilt head back and with one hand pull the coveralls away from your body.
- With other hand run your hand up the zip until you reach the top and unzip the coveralls completely without touching any skin, clothes or uniform.
- Remove coveralls from top to bottom. After freeing shoulders, pull arms out of the sleeves
- Roll the coverall, from the waist down and from the inside of the coverall, down to the top of the shoes taking care to only touch the inside of the coveralls.
- Use one shoe covered foot to pull off the coverall from the other leg and repeat for second leg. Then step away from the coverall and dispose of it.¹⁰

Also see – Public Health England [Removal of \(doffing\) personal protective equipment \(PPE\) including coveralls for aerosol generating procedures \(AGPs\)](#)

DISPOSING OF ITEMS

PPE should be disposed of in the following manner:

- Put into a plastic bag and tied up or sealed.
- Placed into the general waste (where available, clinical waste disposal bins could be used).

⁹ Public Health England. Putting on (donning) personal protective equipment (PPE) including coveralls for aerosol generating procedures (AGPs). [Putting on \(donning\) personal protective equipment \(PPE\) including coveralls for aerosol generating procedures \(AGPs\)](#)

¹⁰ Public Health England. Removal of (doffing) personal protective equipment (PPE) including coveralls for aerosol generating procedures (AGPs). [Removal of \(doffing\) personal protective equipment \(PPE\) including coveralls for aerosol generating procedures \(AGPs\)](#)