

# COLLEGE OF INTEGRATED CHINESE MEDICINE

## FACE MASK POLICY

All students should be prepared to wear a mask on patient request, to protect vulnerable patients at any time, regardless of government recommendations.

- Face masks provide the wearer with some degree of protection against infection.
- However, the primary purpose of wearing a face covering is to protect others (and the general environment) from the spread of infection from droplets exhaled by those suffering from a respiratory disease such as Covid-19.

To combat the spread of airborne respiratory diseases such as Covid 19, particularly where individuals can be asymptomatic (and therefore spread viruses without suffering any ill effects themselves), CICM reserves the right to reimplement mandatory mask wearing, regardless of medical exemptions. If this happens all students and staff will be notified, and the following guidelines will apply.

### 1. Wearing of Face Masks at CICM

**If CICM is required to reintroduce the mask policy, all students, visitors and staff are required to wear a mask on entering the college.**

#### 1.1 Corridors, Theory Lectures

Masks should be worn in corridors, during practical classes or in the clinic. Masks are also required when attending theory lectures for CPD courses, medical exemptions for theory classes are allowed. We recommend those with exemptions wear a sunflower lanyard.

#### 1.2 Enclosed/Crowded Spaces

We expect and recommend masks are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where an individual may encounter people they do not normally meet.

#### 1.3 Close Contact Service

(a) Government guidance on close contact services:

- Clients or staff should wear a face covering, especially where practitioners are conducting treatments which require them to be in close proximity to a person's face, mouth and nose.
- Government guidance for infection protection requires health workers to wear a mask.

(b) The World Health Organisation states that:

- Universal masking policies in health-care facilities are associated with decreased risk of infection in health workers.
- Certain exposures (e.g., performing intubations, direct patient contact, and contact with bodily secretions) and inconsistent/incomplete use of PPE are associated with increased risk of infection in health workers.

## 2. Specification of Face Coverings/Masks/ etc.

In the context of a respiratory disease outbreak such as Covid 19, a face mask refers to at least a type IIR surgical masks or a higher clinical specification, which safely covers the nose and mouth.

- Improvised face coverings such as a scarf, bandana, religious garment, or cloth coverings are not covered by this policy, as they are unlikely to provide the standard of protection required to prevent transmission of airborne, respiratory diseases such as Covid 19.
- When working in a close contact setting such as in practical classes or in clinic a transparent face mask may be worn, and only worn, when the patient in clinic or the paired student when in practical classes has hearing difficulties and seeing the mouth aids communication.
- Face visors are not a mask replacement and are not covered by this policy

## 3. Reasonable Adjustments

CICM recognises that owing to pre-existing medical conditions and other situations, some students and staff may not be able to wear a mask. However, given the level of protection masks provide, the necessity to protect all students, staff, patients, and visitors and in line with our risk assessment, all students and staff must wear a mask while in practical classes or in clinic if required.

We are keen to work with those who find masks uncomfortable:

- Some have found copper masks helpful, and these meet the necessary protection.
- Regular breaks may also be arranged to break down the length of time masks are worn.

## 4. Use of Face Coverings

4.1 When wearing a face covering you should:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on.
- Wear it as intended - avoiding wearing it on your neck or forehead or leaving the mouth or nose (nostrils) exposed.
- Avoid touching the part of the face covering in contact with your mouth and nose, which could be contaminated, and viruses transmitted by touch
- Change the face covering if it becomes damp (thereby reducing the effectiveness) or damaged.

4.2 When removing a face covering:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before removing.
- Only handle the straps, ties, or clips.
- Do not give it to someone else to use.
- Dispose of it in the bins provided.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser once removed.