# COVID-19 – FACE MASK PROCEDURE

As per government recommendations, Bridge Darebin requires its staff, contractors, volunteers and community members, to wear a face mask such as a cloth mask or single use surgical mask where it is difficult to keep 1.5 metres apart from others whilst on Bridge Darebin premises.

* Wearing a face mask protects you and our community by providing an additional physical barrier to COVID-19.
* Keeping 1.5 metres between yourself and others and washing your hands are the best defences against coronavirus (COVID-19).
* There are two types of face masks suitable for community use: cloth masks and single use surgical masks.
* The recommendation to wear a face mask does not apply to children (people aged under 18 years), individuals with breathing difficulties, and those who have physical conditions that make it difficult to wear a face mask.

**Before putting on your face mask**

* Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, or use a hand sanitiser that is made up of over 60% alcohol.
* Check for defects in the mask, such as tears or broken loops.

**Putting on your face mask**

* Position the coloured side of the mask outward.
* If present, make sure the metallic strip is at the top of the mask and positioned against the bridge of your nose.
* If the mask has:
	+ Ear loops: Hold the mask by both ear loops and place one loop over each ear.
	+ Ties: Hold the mask by the upper strings. Tie the upper strings in a secure bow near the crown of your head. Tie the bottom strings securely in a bow near the nape of your neck.
* Mould the bendable metallic upper strip to the shape of your nose by pinching and pressing down on it with your fingers.
* Pull the bottom of the mask over your mouth and chin.
* Be sure the mask fits snugly.
* Don’t touch the mask once in position.
* If the mask gets soiled or damp, replace it with a new one.

**When to take your face mask off**

* You can remove your face mask outside, once you are away from other people, or in your car on your way home.
* Face Masks need to remain on while speaking with other people and maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres.

**How to take off your face mask**

* Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser containing at least 60% alcohol.
* Don’t touch the front of the mask or your face.
* Carefully remove your mask by grasping the ear loops.
* Single use masks should be disposed of responsibly, immediately into a bin.
* Reusable masks need to be folded and put directly into the laundry or into a disposable or washable bag for laundering.
* Clean your hands again.

**Reusing your face mask**

* A cloth mask can be washed and re-used. It is a good idea to have at least two, so you will always have a clean one available.
* Single use surgical masks are for single-use only and should be disposed of responsibly in the rubbish bin.
* Do Not pull your mask down onto your chin for a while and then pull it back up
* Every time you remove a disposable mask, put it in the bin and use a new one, even if it only for a matter of minutes
* A used mask must NEVER be put down anywhere except into a bin.

*Carry a paper bag or zip lock bag with you to carry clean masks and keep them clean and another for dirty masks if you cannot immediately access a rubbish bin.*

**When you should wash your cloth mask**

* A cloth mask should be washed each day after use. However, if during the day your mask is visibly dirty or wet, do not continue wearing your mask; the mask needs to be washed.

**How to wash your cloth mask**

* Cloth masks can be washed in the washing machine with other clothes, or hand-washed using soap and the warmest appropriate water setting for the cloth.
* Your cloth mask should be dry before re-using it. You can use the heat setting on your dryer or lay out flat to air dry. If possible, place the cloth mask in direct sunlight. Wash your hands after handling used face masks.

**When to replace a cloth mask**

Each cloth mask will be constructed differently, therefore there is no specific ‘shelf life’ of a cloth mask. However, the following are signs that your cloth mask may no longer be offering you the same level of protection it once was:

* Your cloth mask does not fit snugly on your face (e.g. you can feel your breath coming out of the sides of the mask).
* Your cloth mask keeps falling off or sliding down.
* There are holes in your cloth mask.
* You need to keep adjusting your cloth mask.
* The material has started to wear thin or fray.