

**Private & Confidential**

[REDACTED]

15 February 2022

**Our Ref. FOIR 002 022**

Dear [REDACTED],

I refer to your request dated 2 January 2022 made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for records held by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA).

Your request was the following:

**Question 1:**

Can HIQA confirm that it has collated a series of randomised studies with confirmed clinical outcome which demonstrates that transmission of a virus can be prevented by wearing a mask in a community setting? ( cotton, surgical etc.)

I am referring to a systematic review, studies or meta-analyses published anywhere in the world or in any scientific journal.

**Question 2:**

Can HIQA provide clinical data to justify the masking of children (aged 12 -18) continuously from 07.45 to 16.15 when the PEL of CO2 is 5000ppm? (7.45 to 16.15 is bus travel, school environs, classrooms, bus home etc)

Clinical data means the CO2 levels measured inside the masks (being less than 5000ppm) and the health consequences or side-effects recorded if any. Side effects for example, would be drowsiness, headaches, nausea.

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Justification would be the clinical proof of reduction in transmission of a virus compared to schools that did not mask during the period March 2020 to October 2021. (For example Sweden)

I have now made a final decision to grant your request on 15 February 2022.

HIQA searched for studies that examined the effectiveness and potential harms that may be associated with the wearing of face masks by children. All identified studies were included and are described and discussed in the HIQA advice to NPHE on face masks described across the three reports listed in the schedule.

### Right of appeal

If you are unhappy with this decision you may seek an internal review. In the event that you wish to do so, please e-mail [foi@hiqa.ie](mailto:foi@hiqa.ie). The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of HIQA. Please note that a fee of €30 (€10 for medical card holders) applies in the case of an internal review of non-personal FOI requests.

You should make your appeal within 4 weeks, from the date of this notification, where a day is defined as a working day excluding, the weekend and public holidays. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances.

### Publication

It is the policy of HIQA to make decisions on non-personal FOI requests, including this decision letter and a copy of the records released, available to the public on our website <https://www.hiqa.ie/about-us/freedom-of-information>. Any personal information relating to you, such as your name etc., will be removed from the decision letter before this happens. This decision letter and the records released under FOI, will be added to our website approximately one week after today's date.

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If you have any queries in relation to this decision, please feel free to contact the FOI Administrator, Sean Lynch, on [foi@hiqa.ie](mailto:foi@hiqa.ie) or 085 8050586.

Yours sincerely,

Conor Teljeur  
Chief Scientist

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