

VIRUSES AND FACE COVERINGS

The Moore-Norman Technology Center (“District”) recognizes the health and safety benefits of face coverings during respiratory virus outbreaks. Viruses like COVID-19 are transmitted through respiratory particles produced by an infected person who coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. These particles can land on or be inhaled through the nose or mouth and into the lungs, which causes infection. Masks help prevent people with a contagious virus from spreading the virus. Mask usage is crucial for authorities to curtail infection and communicability of viruses. Proper facial coverage protects healthy individuals from virus exposure and decreases virus-spread rates so medical institutions can help patients when needed.

Because masking practices vary with perceived risk of virus exposure, this policy establishes five different levels of masking to accommodate all risk levels. The district will implement these protocols when, in its sole discretion, masking is warranted or required by federal, state, local and district-specific conditions. At any time, the district may elect a different level of masking from the levels below as appropriate for the then-current conditions. Further, this policy establishes the disciplinary consequences of non-compliance with the district’s masking protocols as well as limited exceptions.

Definitions

The terms “mask” and “face covering” mean a cloth face covering or non-surgical medical masks, not a surgical mask or respirator (like an N95 respirator). Respirators are personal protective equipment that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) recommends be reserved for health care providers. Cloth face coverings are not personal protective equipment because they are not designed to protect the wearer; cloth face coverings are designed to shield others from infected individuals and thus protect against virus spread.

A “face shield” is a transparent hard plastic face covering that is attached to a helmet, hat, or headband that covers the wearer’s eyes, nose, and mouth. Using a face shield is considered a different form of masking and may be appropriate in limited circumstances for some individuals who cannot wear a cloth face covering due to certain medical conditions. Individuals who wish to use a face shield rather than a mask must receive approval by the director or superintendent. In no circumstances will a face shield that does not extend below the chin of the individual be an acceptable masking substitute.

The term “new” means unused and uncontaminated.

The term “wear” means to put the mask over the nose and mouth and secure it under the chin. Under this definition, the mask should fit against the sides of the face and allow the wearer to breathe easily.

The term “safe distance” or “safe distancing” means a minimum physical distance of six feet, but more than six feet if an individual is engaged in an activity (e.g. public speaking, presenting or lecturing to a group, significant physical exertion, etc.) that may put others at closer distances at greater risk of exposure to respiratory droplets or vapor.

Policy

The Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to determine the level of masking appropriate for the district and for specific district locations given the circumstances in the community. The Superintendent shall designate a level of masking consistent with the following:

- **Level 3 (Mandatory Masking):** All individuals—including students, staff, and visitors—must wear masks while on designated district premises, on district buses or vans, or while engaged in designated district-sponsored activities.
- **Level 2 (Selective Masking):** All individuals on designated district premises or engaged in designated district-sponsored activities must wear masks in situations where safe distancing is unlikely or impossible but may otherwise remove their masks. Instructors may determine when students are required to wear masks in their classrooms and related areas, subject to administrative approval.
- **Level 1 (Optional Masking):** All individuals—including students, staff, and visitors—may wear masks while on district premises or while engaged in district-sponsored activities. Though mask usage is optional, the district highly encourages individuals to wear masks.

The Superintendent shall provide notice to the district community about the level of masking that is to be required for designated locations. When mask wearing is not mandated, individuals who prefer to wear a mask may do so. As warranted under the circumstances, the Superintendent may designate a different level of masking at any time and will provide timely notice of any change in masking level to the district community.

In the event federal, state, or local authorities mandate specific masking requirements, the level of masking selected by the Superintendent shall be consistent with those requirements.

Technology Center Mask Provision

The district may provide masks to any individual on district premises; however, the district must provide masks to students who cannot afford their own. The district will decide and provide notice whether individuals who can afford their own masks must furnish them.

The district may elect to provide new masks daily, but it is not required to do so. Because mask availability may become uncertain, daily provision could become impractical.

Individuals may wear masks that are not provided by the district, provided that the designs of such masks comply with the district dress code. Individuals may decline district-provided masks for substitute masks that satisfy this policy and do not otherwise violate district rules.

No individual is permitted to “share” a face mask with another individual on district premises or during district activities.

Proper Mask Care

Masks should be handled properly and cleaned after each use according to the guidelines issued by the CDC.

Exceptions

General Exceptions: Individuals may decline to wear a mask under the following circumstances:

- A. The individual has a pre-existing health condition that would be adversely affected by mask usage and the individual has provided or will provide, within a reasonable period designated by the Superintendent, a health care provider’s statement (1) explaining the inability to wear a mask; (2) indicating whether the individual can safely wear a face shield or other protective facial covering; and (3) alternative measures recommended by the health care provider for protecting the individual and those who may have contact with an individual determined to be medically unable to wear a mask or other facial covering; or
- B. The individual is having trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Individuals deemed unable, for verified reasons, to wear a face covering will be subject to strict social distancing and other requirements to limit contact with others.

Temporary Exceptions: Individuals may temporarily remove masks when engaging in the following activities¹, provided that safe distancing can be maintained:

- A. A district approved activity in which the location and/or nature of the activity makes it highly impractical and even unsafe to wear a mask;
- B. consumption of food, beverages, and medication; and
- C. other activities as approved by district administration

District sponsors shall assist administrators in determining to what extent masks should be required during district-sponsored activities, given the availability of social distance and practicality of mask-wearing while participating in the activity.

Additionally, in rare situations, the Superintendent may grant an employee a general or temporary exception from wearing a mask when mandated or may grant an appropriate workplace accommodation if wearing a mask substantially impedes the employee from performing a basic function of the employee’s job or the mask creates a workplace hazard. For example, an exception may be warranted if during the course of an employee’s job duties there is a substantial likelihood that a facial mask would catch on fire, catch in machinery, or prevent the employee from seeing or smelling a workplace hazard. An employee who

¹ These activities should be conducted in a manner that maintains appropriate social distance. When a mask is temporarily removed, it should be promptly returned to the face upon the cessation of the activity for which removal was permitted.

believes their position qualifies for this exception should submit a written request detailing the circumstances warranting the exemption to their director or supervisor to present to the Superintendent.

Consequences

Non-compliance with the district's designated masking procedure may result in disciplinary action.

Employees may receive disciplinary action up to and including termination. Students may receive disciplinary action consistent with the district's discipline code.

Even when masks are required, a student must promptly and fully respond to a request by an instructor or district administrator to remove the mask or other facial covering. Any such request will be made only when deemed necessary by the district representative for ensuring compliance with district rules of conduct or for health-or-safety-related reasons.

If the district elects to modify its masking procedure to afford more protection, it must provide individuals with reasonable notice. Individuals will not be disciplined for failure to modify mask usage until given notice of the policy modification and reasonable time to adapt.

Impact on Existing Technology Center Policies and Rules

Regardless of which masking procedures the district employs, no individual may wear a mask with a design on it which violates the district's dress code or would substantially disrupt or materially interfere with the educational environment of the district.

References: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) About Cloth Face Coverings*; CDC: *How to Wear Your Cloth Face Covering*; CDC: *How to Wash Your Cloth Face Covering*; CDC: *Considerations for Wearing Cloth Face Coverings*.