

808 COVID-19 FACE COVERINGS ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

I. Purpose of the Administrative Procedure

The purpose of this policy is to establish requirements for employees, students and other persons (including visitors, guests, contractors, etc.) present on school property to wear face coverings in classrooms, preschool, childcare settings and other indoor areas, as well as outdoor areas where a physical distance of six feet cannot be maintained between persons, in order to minimize exposure to COVID-19. Wearing face coverings/shields is not a replacement for physical distancing. Layers of protection (distancing, face coverings, face shields) increase the protective measure of being exposed to COVID-19.

II. General Statement of Administrative Procedure

A. The policy of the school district is to comply with [Executive Order 20-81](#), [Executive Order 20-82](#), and applicable face covering requirements from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE).

B. Face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer does not know they are infected with COVID-19.

C. Unless an exception outlined in section V below is met, all students, staff and others present in school buildings and district offices or riding on school transportation vehicles are required to wear a face covering.

D. All staff, students (K-12) and visitors above the age of five must wear face coverings upon entry to school district building(s) and to wear them when inside a school district building. Face coverings must also be worn when outside (on school district property) when unable to socially distance with at least six-feet of personal space. Students, parents/guardians, staff and visitors who do not wear a face covering may be denied access to the school district buildings and grounds.

E. Face coverings should be worn over the mouth and nose of each individual. Face shields are not a replacement for a face covering; both are needed.

F. A violation of this policy occurs when any student, staff or other person present in a school building, in the school district office, outside on school district property where six-feet of personal space cannot be maintained or on a school transportation vehicle fails to wear a face covering, unless an enumerated exception applies.

III. Definition of Face Coverings

A. A face covering must be worn to cover the nose and mouth completely, should not be overly tight or restrictive and should feel comfortable to wear. The following are included in the [MDH](#) definition of a face covering:

1. Types of face coverings can include a paper or disposable mask, a cloth mask, a neck gaiter, a scarf, a bandanna or a religious face covering.

B. Disposable masks should only be worn for a single use. Reusable face coverings should be laundered after each use.

C. Students and staff should have a back-up face covering in the event theirs becomes soiled.

1. The state will distribute one cloth face covering for every K-12 student and staff member, and three (3) disposable masks per student.

D. Printed face coverings must meet the following criteria. Face coverings may not include the following:

1. Promoting products or activities that are illegal for use by minors.

2. Objectionable emblems, badges, symbols, signs, words, objects or pictures communicating a message that is racist, sexist or otherwise evidences gang membership or affiliation, or approves, advances or provokes any form of discrimination, harassment and/or violence against other individuals. For additional information refer to [Policy 504](#).

3. The intention of this administrative procedure is not to abridge the rights of students to express political, religious, philosophical, or similar opinions by wearing apparel on which such messages are stated. Such messages are acceptable as long as they are not lewd, vulgar, obscene, defamatory, profane, or do not advocate violence or harassment against others.

E. A face shield is a clear plastic barrier that covers the face and allows visibility of facial expressions and lip movements for speech perception. A face shield should extend below the chin anteriorly, to the ears laterally and there should be no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield's headpiece.

F. Face coverings or masks that incorporate a valve designed to facilitate easy exhaling, mesh masks, or masks with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design or material or vents are not sufficient face coverings because they allow exhaled droplets to be released into the air.

IV. Exception and Alternatives; Temporary Removal of Face Coverings

A. Face coverings should not be placed on anyone under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance or anyone who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a developmental, medical or behavioral health condition.

B. A face shield may be used as an alternative to a face covering in the following situation:

1. Teachers, who when wearing a face covering may impede the educational process (ex: DHH student in classroom, Speech Teacher)
2. Staff, students or visitors who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a documented developmental, medical or behavioral health condition (IEP, 504 or documented health plan).
3. Staff providing direct support student services, when a face covering impedes the service being provided.
4. A student in grades kindergarten through eighth grade may wear a face shield when wearing a face covering is problematic for the student. Documentation by a healthcare provider may be requested and required.

C. Facial coverings may be temporarily removed during activities such as eating, drinking, playing an instrument or exercising. Students should follow guidance from the teachers and staff, and refrain from removing their face covering until appropriate.

D. It is important that students and staff follow the spirit of this policy. Frequent, intentional removal of face coverings or interfering with another student's or staff member's face covering is inappropriate, and repeat incidents may be considered harassment or bullying (District Policies [506](#) and [514](#)).

V. EXEMPTIONS

The following individuals are exempt from face covering requirements:

- A. Individuals with a documented medical condition, mental health condition or disability that makes it unreasonable for the individual to maintain wearing a face covering. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals who have a medical condition that compromises their ability to breathe, and individuals who are unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance. These individuals should consider using alternatives to face coverings, including clear face shields, and staying at home as much as possible.
- B. Children with severe cognitive issues, sensory challenges, significant respiratory impairments (e.g. tracheostomy or on oxygen) or orthopedic or neurological issues (e.g. cerebral palsy), if they are unable to remove a face covering in an emergency, may not be able to wear a face covering and may be exempted with documentation from a healthcare provider.
- C. Children who are five years old and under. Those who are under two years old should never wear a face covering due to the risk of suffocation. Those who are at least two years old are encouraged to wear a face covering if they can do so in compliance with CDC guidance on How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings (i.e., without frequently touching or removing the covering).
- D. Individuals at their workplace when wearing a face covering would create a job hazard for the individual or others, as determined by local, state or federal regulators or workplace safety and health standards and guidelines (ex. those at increased risk of heat-related illness).

E. Staff and students/guardians who believe they qualify to wear a face shield instead of a face covering should submit medical documentation to the District's Human Resources Department and get approval through their building principal.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

A. MDH provided face coverings and/or face shields to employees and students, as described in III-C above. Employees and students may choose to wear their own face covering as long as it covers the nose and mouth. To the extent practicable, the school district will maintain an extra supply of face coverings for students who forget to bring their face covering on both buses and in schools.

B. The school district will teach and reinforce the use of face coverings and/or face shields for students and staff throughout the school day, including on transportation vehicles, inside school buildings, and generally when on school grounds.

C. Individuals who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a medical condition or disability related condition may be permitted to utilize alternative options such as a face shield or other reasonable accommodation. The superintendent or designee shall have discretion to determine whether an employee, parent or community member qualifies for reasonable accommodation and the accommodation to be provided.

1. For a Student with a medical condition or disability, the student's education team (i.e. IEP team, Section 504 team, health plan team) will determine whether the student qualifies for a reasonable accommodation and the accommodation to be provided.

2. As a condition to granting a reasonable accommodation, the school district may require an individual to provide a healthcare provider's note and/or other relevant information or with respect to the condition or circumstance. Requests for reasonable accommodations from the face covering requirement shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with applicable federal and state law.

D. All face coverings shall meet the requirements of applicable dress code policies and/or codes of conduct.

E. The school district will make distance learning available to its enrolled students who may be otherwise unwilling to wear a face covering and do not qualify for an exemption (as described in item V, above).

Legal References: [Emergency Executive Order 20-81](#)
[Emergency Executive Order 20-82](#)
[Minn. Stat. § 12.32 \(Governor's Orders and Rules, Effect\)](#)
[Minn. Stat. § 12.45 \(Violations; Penalties\)](#)

Cross References: [MSBA/MASA Model Policy 807 \(Health and Safety Policy\)](#)
[MSBA/MASA Model Policy 504 \(Student Dress and Appearance\)](#)