

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Code</i>
	<b>FACE COVERINGS</b>	<b>EBCFA</b>

### ***HOLLISTON***

The Holliston Public Schools (HPS) is committed to providing a safe environment as schools reopen during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks or face coverings. Therefore, in accordance with guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice.

An appropriate face covering can be disposable or reusable and must be: clean, fully cover the nose and mouth and secure under the chin, be made with at least 2 layers of breathable material, fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face, and be secured with ties or ear loops. More tightly woven materials, such as cotton fabrics with higher thread counts, are preferable, while elastic materials are not recommended due to the higher pore size and lower filtration efficiency (Harvard, 2020). Based on guidance from health authorities, neck gaiters, open-chin triangle bandanas, and face coverings containing valves, mesh material or holes of any kind will not be considered appropriate. Further, face coverings are not required to be surgical masks or respirators (such as N95 masks).

A face mask or face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals when in school buildings; and on school transportation, even when physical distancing is observed. All students in grades Preschool through 12+ are expected to wear a face covering as described above. If alone in a closed room by oneself, a mask does not need to be worn.

Individuals may be temporarily excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons, per CDC guidance:

The individual:

- has trouble breathing;
- is unconscious;
- is incapacitated;
- cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance.

Furthermore, face masks or face coverings will not be required for anyone who has a medical, behavioral or other challenge making it unsafe to wear a face mask or face covering. A written note from a physician is required for a requested exemption. Parents may not excuse their child from the face mask requirement by signing a waiver.

Additionally, face masks or face coverings are not required as noted below:

- during supervised mask breaks; and
- while eating or drinking.

When outside, masks are recommended for high contact sports.

Unvaccinated individuals must maintain at least three feet of distance inside when unmasked. Physical distancing is recommended for all individuals whenever feasible.

A student's mask or face covering is to be provided by the student's parent/guardian(s). Staff members are responsible for providing their own face coverings. However, HPS will supply disposable face coverings for individuals who arrive at a building, or board school transportation, without one.

If students are in violation of this policy, the building principal will consult with the parent/guardian(s) to determine whether an exception is appropriate, or the student may be removed from the school building for in-person learning until such time as they can comply with the requirement or the requirement is lifted.

Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of School Committee policy.

Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/district facility.

This policy will remain in place until revised or rescinded by the School Committee.

First Reading:	August 17, 2021
Second Reading:	August 26, 2021
Third Reading:	
Policy Adopted:	August 26, 2021
Policy Amended:	August 24, 2021
Policy Reviewed:	
Legal References:	Commonwealth of Massachusetts, COVID-19 Order No. 31 - <a href="https://www.mass.gov/doc/may-1-2020-masks-and-face-coverings/download">https://www.mass.gov/doc/may-1-2020-masks-and-face-coverings/download</a>
Policy Cross Reference:	JICA: Dress Code Policy
Procedure Reference:	<a href="#">Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Considerations for Wearing Masks</a> - <a href="#">DESE Guidance on Face Coverings</a> <a href="#">Harvard Study</a>