# Policy ADD Face Covering

*Issued* **9/21**

To reduce the spread of the pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that a face covering be worn in public settings when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. The district will consider the circumstances in the community and consult local public health officials for the implementation of this policy. Specifics such as distance to be maintained will be updated via administrative rule, ADD-R, and communicated to staff as soon as is practicable.

This policy is intended to be in effect when the COVID-19 Recent Disease Activity by County rating in Charleston County is Medium or High by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).

**Definitions**

A *face covering* is a piece of fabric, cloth, or other material that covers the wearer's nose, mouth, and chin simultaneously and is secured to the wearer's face by elastic, ties, or other means. Acceptable face coverings may be homemade, and they may be reusable or disposable. Neck scarves, bandanas, gaiters, and masks with exhalation valves or vents are not acceptable face coverings and shall not be used.

A *face shield* made of flexible plastic that wraps around the wearer's face and extends below his/her chin may also be used as a face covering. Face shields are not to be worn without an appropriate face covering unless specifically authorized.

**Staff Members**

Staff members will wear a face covering while on district property or conducting business on behalf of the district (e.g. driving a bus, conducting a home visit, supervising athletic events, etc.). Staff members include, but are not limited to, salaried and hourly employees, school volunteers, student teachers, and interns. The district will provide masks to staff members and expects that reusable masks will be washed regularly to ensure maximum protection.

**Students**

All students will wear face coverings while on district property, on district transportation, or attending a school-related activity (e.g. athletic events, field trips, etc.). Certain classes or activities may be granted a limited exception to this requirement at the discretion of the superintendent or his/her designee. The district will provide masks to students and expects that reusable masks will be washed regularly to ensure maximum protection.

Exceptions for wearing a face covering (both faculty and students) may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- mealtimes
- outdoor recess where students can maintain a physical distance in accordance with established COVID-19 safety protocols/public health guidance
- administration of medication
- planned and socially distanced mask breaks

**Visitors**

Non-essential visitors to district buildings will be limited in accordance with administrative rule KI-R, *Visitors*. Visitors include, but are not limited to, parents/legal guardians, contract service providers, and delivery persons. Visitors will wear a face covering while on district property. Visitors will be denied entry or asked to leave district property if they refuse to wear a face covering.

**Accommodations**

Requests for exceptions under this policy for health or developmental conditions or religious exemption will be considered by the superintendent or his/her designee, who may request documentation justifying the exception.

Students (or parents/legal guardians) who request to be exempted from wearing a face covering for reasons other than a health or developmental condition or religious exemption will be offered virtual learning for the period that face coverings are required on district property.

**Harassment and Bullying**

The district will not tolerate harassment of anyone wearing face coverings or those with recognized exemptions to the face covering requirement and will appropriately discipline students, staff members, or visitors who engage in behavior that interferes with any student or staff member's ability to comply with this policy.

**Discipline**

Failure or refusal to wear a face covering by a staff member or student may result in discipline in accordance with district policy and codes of conduct, as applicable.

This policy is intended to align with district policies including, but not limited to, student and staff dress codes. To the extent this policy does not align, it will supersede others in accordance with applicable laws and regulations in effect at the time. For clarification on potential conflicts between policies, the interpretation of the superintendent or his/her designee is final.

The provisions of all applicable dress code policies for students and staff are incorporated herein. The board authorizes the superintendent or his/her designee to modify these requirements as necessary to meet public health and safety guidelines as provided by DHEC. In addition, the board authorizes the superintendent to request direct federal funding as required to accomplish the enforcement of this policy.

Adopted 8/24/20; Revised 5/10/21, 9/13/21

Charleston County School District