

Regulation

FACE COVERINGS

Any face covering requirement shall comport with the mandates of any Federal directive, executive order of the Governor, administrative order of the State Director of Emergency Management, or order of a state, county or local health department having jurisdiction over the school district.

The board prohibits bullying in accordance with law and board policy 5131.1 Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying of students who choose to wear personal protective equipment (PPE), including face coverings. Any student or staff member who is found to have harassed, intimidated or bullied a student for wearing personal protective equipment shall be disciplined in accordance with the code of student conduct and board policy 5131.1 Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying.

The chief school administrator, after consultation with the school nurse and the school medical inspector may at his/her discretion reinstate the face covering requirement and require staff, students and visitors to use face coverings in the indoor portion of the school district premises. Face covering requirements may be reinstated school-wide or in certain classes or school areas where social distancing cannot be implemented. The chief school administrator shall inform the board president prior to reinstating any universal face covering requirement. The chief school administrator may require staff and students to wear face coverings when:

- A. Recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) including the local DOH;
- B. Recommended by the New Jersey Department of Education;
- C. Local conditions indicate an escalation of infection in the schools or the towns sending students to the district;
- D. Social distancing cannot be implemented in a classroom or other school areas, including school assemblies and performances;
- E. Exposure to COVID-19 or any variant of the virus would be potentially life-threatening to a student or staff member with an underlying medical condition;
- F. Other reasons deemed appropriate by the board in consultation with the chief school administrator and school nurse.

Face Coverings

- A. When staff, students, and visitors are required to wear face coverings the following exceptions to the requirement shall apply:
 - 1. When wearing a face covering would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors;
 - 2. When the individual has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face coverings without assistance;
 - 3. When a student's documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Educational Plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, precludes use of a face covering;
 - 4. When the individual is under two (2) years of age;
 - 5. When the individual is engaged in activity that cannot physically be performed while wearing a face covering, such as eating or drinking, or playing a musical instrument that would be obstructed by a face covering;
 - 6. When the individual is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity;
 - 7. When a student is participating in high-intensity physical activities during a physical education class in

FACE COVERINGS (regulation continued)

- a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals;
or
- 8. When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task;
- B. Individuals shall be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently;
- C. Information shall be provided to staff, students, and students' families on proper use, removal, and washing of face coverings;
- D. Currently, the CDC does not recommend use of face shields as a substitute for face coverings. Therefore, they may not be used to satisfy the face covering requirement detailed above. However, they may be an option for students with medical or other challenges that preclude the use of face coverings. If face shields are used without a face covering, they should wrap around the sides of the wearer's face and extend to below the chin;
- E. Students and educators that rely on facial cues may consider the use of clear face coverings where available. This might include students who are deaf or hard of hearing, students receiving speech/language services, young students in early education programs, and English-language learners;
- F. Researchers have identified "frequent discomfort" as a potential challenge associated with implementing use of face covering requirements. Students and staff shall be provided face covering breaks throughout the day. Face covering breaks should only occur when social distancing can be maintained and ideally outside or with windows open ("Physical Distancing, face coverings, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis");
- G. Face coverings shall be provided by the student's family/guardian and may be included as part of the back to school supplies list provided to families/guardians prior to the start of the school year. The district shall strive to provide extra disposable face coverings for students who need them, and shall provide face coverings for students that are experiencing financial hardship and are unable to afford them to the greatest extent possible.

Social Distancing During a Pandemic

The district shall ensure that social distancing within the schools, classrooms and buses is maintained to the maximum extent practicable. This will be achieved by ensuring students are seated at least six feet apart. When conditions such as space in the classroom or other areas of the school make a physical distance of six feet difficult or impossible to maintain, additional modifications may be implemented. These include but are not limited to requiring face coverings to be worn, using physical barriers between desks and turning desks to face the same direction (rather than facing each other) or having students sit on only one side of the table, spaced apart.

Any modifications that are made to school district facilities shall be in coordination with local code officials and Department county offices to ensure that alterations adhere to school safety requirements.

Social distancing practices shall be maintained on school buses (at least six feet of distance between riders) to the maximum extent practicable (see board policy 3541.33 Transportation Safety) and face coverings may be required on school buses at the direction of the chief school administrator.

Screening

When local conditions indicate an escalation of infection in the schools or the towns sending students to the district, screening procedures may be implemented for staff students and visitors entering the schools according to the following guidelines:

FACE COVERINGS (regulation continued)

A. Screening and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

1. Adequate amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) shall be available, accessible, and provided for use by staff and students. Staff and students may be required to wear face coverings when being admitted to the school and may be screened for entry;
2. The principal or his or her designee shall develop a school entry plan that includes:
 - a. Staff assigned to do the screening;
 - b. Designated entrances that will be used to admit students;
 - c. The assignment of classes and grades to designated entrances and/or designated entrance times;
3. Staff must visually check students for symptoms upon arrival (which may include temperature checks) and/or confirm with families that students are free of COVID-19 symptoms;
4. Health checks must be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations;
5. Results must be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed;
6. Screening procedures shall take into account students with disabilities and accommodations that may be needed in the screening process for those students;

B. Procedures for symptomatic staff and students:

1. The school principal shall establish an isolation space;
2. Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 shall be safely and respectfully isolated from others. Students should remain in isolation with continued supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult;
3. The [current Communicable Disease Service](#) guidance for illness reporting shall be followed;
4. If a staff member becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in a district facility tests positive for COVID-19, the staff members shall notify the principal and the school nurse. The school nurse shall immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality;

C. Preparations for when someone tests positive for COVID-19:

1. The school principal shall establish an isolation space;
2. Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 shall be safely and respectfully taken to the designated isolation space and isolated from others. Students should remain in isolation with continued supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult;
3. The [current Communicable Disease Service](#) guidance for illness reporting shall be followed;
4. Readmittance to school shall be consistent with [Department of Health guidance and information for schools](#) and Department of Health/Communicable Disease Service's [Quick Reference Guidance on Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Home Isolation for Persons Diagnosed with COVID-19](#);
5. Contact tracing shall be initiated including records of groups/cohorts, assigned staff, and daily attendance.

D. Protocols to address a positive case:

Students and employees may be asked to leave or not come into school if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit one or more of the symptoms of COVID-19, based on CDC guidance, that is not otherwise explained:

1. A fever of 100° F or greater;
2. Cough;

FACE COVERINGS (regulation continued)

3. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
4. Chills;
5. Repeated shaking with chills;
6. Muscle pain;
7. Headache;
8. Sore throat;
9. New loss of taste or smell;
10. Fatigue;
11. Congestion or runny nose;
12. Nausea or vomiting;
13. Diarrhea.

Adopted: April 6, 2022
NJSBA Review/Update:
Readopted: