

FACE COVERINGS

The Marblehead Public School District 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. Therefore, in accordance with updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, the following requirements are in place until further notice.

A face mask that, per DPH and CDC guidance:

- covers the nose and mouth;
- fits securely and comfortably against the side of the face;
- is secured with ties or ear loops;
- allows for breathing without restriction;
- does NOT have an exhalation valve or vent; and
- can be laundered and machine dried without damage or change of shape

must be worn by all individuals inside school buildings (including all schools and the school district central offices) and on school transportation. Students are exempt from masking requirements when outdoors on school property, even when social distancing cannot be maintained. All other individuals who are not students must continue to wear masks outdoors on school property when social distancing cannot be maintained, on school grounds, during school hours, at school-sponsored events, and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed. Individuals attending school-sponsored events that do not occur on school property are subject to the masking requirements applicable to that property.

-Exempted from this policy are individuals under the age of 2. Families will be required to provide a daily face mask, along with a backup face mask, if possible. Face masks should be labeled with the student's name. Schools will have backup masks when needed should a face mask become soiled, broken or misplaced.

Individuals may be 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.

In addition, accommodations will be made for individuals for whom wearing face masks is not possible or safe due to a medical condition, disability impact, a significant impediment to communication, or other health or safety factors, which for students may include behavioral challenges. Medical documentation acceptable to Marblehead Public Schools is required for a requested accommodation. Any accommodations must be approved by the building Principal in consultation with the school nurse or local board of health. A face shield or physical barrier is not an acceptable substitute for a face mask unless it has been deemed appropriate with an official exemption as part of the accommodation determination. Parents may not excuse their child from the face mask requirement by signing a waiver.

Additionally, face masks will not be required:

- during mask breaks ~~which will preferably occur outdoors~~, with a minimum of 6 feet of physical distance between individuals. All mask breaks are optional for the individual student. Students who do not want or need a mask break will not be forced to participate
- while eating or drinking; ~~which ideally occur outdoors and/or with maximum physical distancing—~~
- ~~during physical education classes, chorus/choir, singing, brass & woodwind instruments or musical theater, all of which occur while outside with a minimum of 10 feet of physical distancing between individuals~~

A student's mask is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members will be supplied masks. The district will supply a disposable face mask for individuals who arrive at a building, or who board school transportation, without one. In addition to their required characteristics per DPH and CDC guidance listed above, masks must be appropriate in compliance with the same rules as are set forth in the school Dress Code and Student Handbook. No masks containing offensive or inappropriate material will be allowed.

If a student refuses to wear a mask while inside school buildings and does not have a documented reason that is consistent with this Policy, the student will be sent home. Currently, mask wearing is mandated by the State of Massachusetts and the decision to dismiss a student for not wearing a mask has been approved by the Marblehead Board of Health. While we strive to educate through restorative justice principles, there will be progressive discipline for students who do not follow the mask guidelines.

Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of School Committee policy or of the Marblehead Public Schools workplace rules and requirements.

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

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

LEGAL REF.: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, COVID-19 Order No. 31 - <https://www.mass.gov/doc/may-1-2020-masks-and-face-coverings/download>

REFS.: Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Considerations for Wearing Masks -

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – Reopening Guidelines - <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>

Commonwealth of Massachusetts – Mask Up MA! –

<https://www.mass.gov/news/mask-up-ma>

SOURCE: MASC –

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