



809 COVID-19 FACE COVERING POLICY

I. PURPOSE

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 order to minimize exposure to COVID-19.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Disability: The term “disability” means a mental or physical impairment that substantially or materially limits a major life activity.
- B. District: The term “District” refers to Columbia Heights Public Schools. The District is an institution of learning. It is also a nonprofit, political subdivision. The District is not a “business” that has “customers”.
- C. Face Covering: The term “face covering” means any paper or disposable mask, cloth face mask, medical-grade mask, medical grade respirator, scarf, bandanna, neck gaiter, or religious face covering that covers the nose and mouth completely in accordance with CDC guidance. Masks with valves, mesh, openings, holes, vents, or visible gaps in the material do not qualify as face coverings.
- D. Face Shield: The term “face shield” means a clear plastic barrier that covers the face, extends below the chin, and wraps around the sides of the face to the ears. A face shield may not have an exposed gap between the forehead and the shield’s headpiece.
- E. Medical Authority: For purposes of this policy, the term “medical authority” means a medical doctor, clinical psychologist, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner who has seen or treated the student or employee in question.
- F. Medical Condition: For purposes of this policy, the term “medical condition” means a disease, illness, injury, or physiologic, mental, or psychological disorder. A biological or psychological state that is within the range of normal human variation is not a medical condition.
- G. Parent: For purpose of this policy, the term “parent” means the legal parent, legal guardian, or conservator of a child who is under the age of eighteen. A student who

is eighteen years of age or older is considered to be a “parent” for purposes of this policy, unless a court has found that the student is incompetent and has appointed a conservator for the student.

- H. Visitor: For purposes of this policy, the term “visitor” means any person other than a student or employee of the District. The term visitor includes, but is not limited to, parents, community members, vendors, and contractors.

III. EXEMPTIONS

A. Circumstances When a Face Covering Should Not Be Used

1. Children under the age of two: A face covering should not be placed on a child under the age of two.
2. Incapacitated persons: A face covering should not be placed on any person who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
3. Trouble breathing: A face covering should not be placed on any person who has trouble breathing,

B. Persons Who Are Exempt from Wearing a Face Covering

1. Medical condition, mental health condition, or disability: A person is not required to wear a face covering if the person has a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for the person to maintain a face covering. This includes a person who has a medical condition that compromises the person’s ability to breath.

C. Face covers are not required outdoors.

IV. WHEN FACE COVERINGS MAY BE TEMPORARILY REMOVED

A. All students ages three and up, staff, employees and guests

1. Temporary removal permitted when a face covering or a face shield is impracticable: Persons and children who are required to wear a face covering or shield may remove the covering or shield temporarily to engage in certain activities that make wearing a covering or shield impracticable. These activities include:
 - a. Eating;
 - b. Drinking;

- c. Communicating with an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing;
 - d. Communicating with an individual who has a disability, medical condition, or mental health condition that makes communication with that individual difficult while wearing a face covering;
 - e. Participating in physical activities;
 - f. When Pre-Kindergarten student is resting or napping;
 - g. Participating in activities where the face covering would get wet;
 - h. Playing instruments;
 - i. Performing or presenting; and
 - j. Receiving a service, such as a nursing or medical service, which would be difficult or impossible to perform with a face covering;
2. Single group cohort in single setting. Employees are required to wear face coverings or shields in these settings to the extent possible, especially when social distancing cannot be maintained, unless wearing a covering or shield would interfere with the early childhood development process. This exception does not apply to staff who float between rooms such as those helping to cover staff break times or deliver meals. In those cases, staff must be required to wear face coverings.

B. Pre-K 3 Through Grade 12.

- 1. Staff working alone: Staff may temporarily remove face coverings when working alone (such that social distancing is maintained), including when alone in an office, classroom, district vehicle, cubicle with walls or barriers (including plexiglass) that are at least face level, or other enclosed work area.
- 2. Temporary removal permitted when a face covering or a face shield is impracticable: Any person who is in a school building or district office may temporarily remove a face covering or face shield in the following situations, provided that social distancing of at least six feet (or more, if specified below) is maintained, to the extent possible:
 - a. During specific activities that the Minnesota State High School league has identified as exceptions to mask/face covering requirements;
 - b. When eating or drinking;

- c. When participating in practices or performances involving singing, acting, public speaking (e.g. debate or speech team events), or playing musical instruments that make wearing a face covering difficult or impracticable, provided that three to six-feet of social distancing is maintained, to the extent possible;
- d. When asked to remove the covering for identification purposes, such as when a person enters a school building during the school day and a staff member asks the person to remove the face covering briefly for the purposes of verifying the person’s identity;
- e. When communicating with an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing or who has a disability, medical condition, or mental health condition that makes communication with a face covering difficult;
- f. When receiving a service – including nursing, medical, or personal care services – that cannot be performed or would be difficult to perform when the individual receiving the service is wearing a face covering.

V. WHEN FACE SHIELDS ARE PERMITTED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO FACE COVERINGS

- A. Students: A student who is not medically exempt may use a face shield as an alternative to a face covering if:
 - 1. The student is unable to tolerate a face covering due to a developmental, behavioral, or medical condition;
 - 2. The administrator determines that wearing a face covering would be problematic for the student; or
 - 3. A face covering would interfere with religious attire that is worn as part of a sincerely held religious belief.
- B. Employees: An employee who is not medically exempt may use a face shield as an alternative to a face covering with approval from Human Resources Director if:
 - 1. The employee is a teacher and a face covering would impede the educational process;
 - 2. The employee is a staff member who is providing direct student support services and a face covering would interfere with the services that are being provided;
 - 3. The employee has a disability or medical condition that prevents the

employee from wearing a face covering;

4. A face covering would interfere with religious attire that is worn as part of a sincerely held religious belief; or
 5. A face covering would create a job hazard for the employee or others, if approved by Human Resources Director based on local, state, or federal laws, requirements, or workplace safety and health standards and guidelines
- C. Visitors: A visitor may use a face shield as an alternative to a face covering if:
1. The visitor states that they have ~~has~~ a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable to wear a face covering; or
 2. A face covering would interfere with religious attire that is worn by the visitor as part of a sincerely held religious belief

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

[Note: Pursuant to future Executive Orders in the State of Minnesota, the district will update Policy 809 as soon as practicable and will comply with the Executive Order as written]

- A. Posting: The requirement to wear a face covering will be conspicuously posted in the entryway of each building that is owned, leased, or operated by the District. Additionally, this policy will be posted in each building and posted on the District's website.
- B. Support: School staff members will provide support and guidance to a student who cannot wear a face covering because of a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for the student to maintain a face covering, and to a student who cannot wear a face covering because the student qualifies to wear a face shield instead of a face covering (i.e. the student is unable to tolerate a face covering due to a developmental, behavioral, or medical condition; a face covering would be problematic; or a face covering would interfere with religious attire that is worn is part of a sincerely held religious belief).
- C. Access to Face Coverings: The District will make at least one face covering available to each student and to each employee of the District. Students and employees may choose to wear their own face coverings as long as they meet the definition of a "face covering" under this Policy and they cover the mouth and nose completely. All face coverings must comply with School District Policies. To the extent practicable, the District will maintain an extra supply of face coverings for

students and employees who forget to bring them.

VII. COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

- A. All face coverings must comply with School Board Policy 514 Bullying; 413 Harassment and Violence; and 504 Student Dress and Appearance. To the extent that any conflict exists between the two policies, this policy controls.
- B. Employees who fail or refuse to comply with this policy may be subject to discipline.
- C. Students who fail or refuse to comply with this policy will be handled in accordance with Policy 506 Student Discipline.
- D. The District may, in its discretion, report violators of this policy to law enforcement.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 12.45 (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)

Other References: MDH Guidance for Delivering Direct Student Support Services: Staff Protective Equipment
MDH Frequently Asked Questions About the Requirement to Wear Face Coverings,
MDH Best Practices for Masks: Considerations for People with Disabilities and Special Health Needs
MDE 2021-2022 School Year Health Recommendations for Schools
MDH Best Practice Recommendations for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools for the 2021-2022 School Year
MDH Recommendations for Infection Prevention and Control Practices for Delivering Direct Student Support Services