

Mask-Wearing Expectations and Protocol

Mask Wearing Expectations

Wearing cloth face coverings may help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and is required for staff and students in all indoor public spaces. There are specific exceptions based on age, development, or disability. See the [Washington State Department of Health Guidance on Cloth Face Coverings](#) and [CDC Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings](#) for more information. All students, volunteers, or guests must wear cloth face coverings or an acceptable alternative at school when indoors. Schools should provide face coverings for staff and students who don't have them.

For staff, cloth facial coverings must be worn by every individual (except as described below) not working alone at the location. Certain situations may require a higher level of protection under L&I safety and health rules and guidance. Refer to [Employer Health & Safety Requirements for School Scenarios](#) and [Coronavirus Facial Covering and Mask Requirements](#) for additional details. Please also refer to our [District's Labor and Industries Aligned Personal Protective Equipment Guidance](#)

1. Cloth face coverings should not be worn by:
 - Those under 2 years of age.
 - Those with a disability that prevents them from comfortably wearing or removing a face covering.
 - Those with certain respiratory conditions or trouble breathing.
 - Those who are deaf or hard of hearing, and those who provide instruction to such people, and use facial and mouth movements as part of communication.
 - Those advised by a medical, legal, or behavioral health professional that wearing a face covering may pose a risk to that person.
2. In rare circumstances when a cloth face covering cannot be worn, students and staff may use a clear face covering or a face shield with a drape or wrap as an alternative to a cloth face covering. If used, face shields should extend below the chin, to the ears, and have no gap at the forehead.
3. Younger students must be supervised when wearing a face covering or face shield. These students may need help with their masks and getting used to wearing them.
4. Continue practicing physical distancing while wearing cloth face coverings.
5. Students may remove face coverings to eat and drink or when they can be physically distanced outside. If students need a "mask break" take them outside or to a large, well ventilated room where there is sufficient space to ensure more than six feet of physical distance between people.
6. The school is responsible for providing appropriate PPE for all staff, including those who provide assistance to students who have special needs. Refer to [Employer Health & Safety Requirements for School Scenarios](#) and our [District's Labor and Industries Aligned Personal Protective Equipment Guidance](#)

What if a Student Refuses to Wear a Mask?

In the midst of this community health crisis, our district believes that wearing a mask and observing social distancing are essential aspects of citizenship. For students and staff to be safely in-person, each member of the school community has an obligation ensure that we are doing all that we can to minimize the likelihood that we will spread the virus to other people.

We know that this may be a challenge in some situations and want to positively reinforce this message. If students are struggling to wear a mask in the classroom, we will follow a procedure similar to the ways that we address other concerns about behaviors relating to health and safety. In such situations, staff who are supervising the student will:

- Restate the expectation with positive feedback that directs the desired behavior.
- Staff will also communicate with the student's family to help support the expectation.
- If a student continues to adhere to this expectation, a building administrator will be asked to intervene and support the student in meeting this expectation.
- In the event that the student remains unwilling to meet this expectation, the building administrator will work with staff to find another location for the student to engage with his/her learning while practicing the desired expectation.
- Parents will continue to be informed regarding any intervention or school discipline that may be used to ensure that this safety measure is observed.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction" provides the following guidance:

"For students who are not exempt from the face covering requirement, schools should take steps to educate the student on safety compliance, implement positive behavior interventions, recommend alternative face coverings (such as a face shield instead of a mask, which can feel more comfortable), and, when appropriate, consult with the student's parent or guardian. Only as a last resort may districts consider excluding a student for refusing to wear a face covering. If a student is excluded, the school must provide the student with an opportunity to receive educational services during the exclusion and then return the student to their regular educational setting when the exclusion ends. Students who are unable to consistently wear a face covering due to sensory, behavioral, or other disabilities must not be disciplined or denied access to educational services as a result."

We appreciate everyone's commitment to health and safety. The likelihood that our schools remain safe havens in the middle of this pandemic depends upon it.