

# Face Covering Expectations Protocol

## Expectations for Face Coverings

Correct use of cloth face coverings or masks helps prevent the spread of COVID-19 and is required when indoors at K-12 facilities for all school personnel, students, and visitors. 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. Schools should provide face coverings for staff and students who do not have them.

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) defines a cloth face covering as “anything that completely covers your mouth and nose and fits securely on the sides of your face and under your chin. It should be made of two or more layers of tightly woven fabric with ties or straps that go around your head or behind your ears”. This information may be found [here](#). Further face covering guidance and recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) can also be found [here](#).

In order to comply with the DOH and CDC face covering standards, all school personnel, volunteers, visitors, and students must wear cloth face coverings, or an acceptable alternative (e.g., surgical mask or clear face shield with a drape), at school when indoors and while on district provided transportation. Per the Secretary of Health’s Mask Order, face coverings are not required outdoors, regardless of vaccination status. Masks are strongly recommended for unvaccinated individuals when outdoors in crowded spaces or when in close contact with people from outside their household for a sustained period of time, as the risk of COVID-19 infection increases with the duration and closeness of contact between individuals. The district will support students and staff who choose to wear a mask or face covering outdoors. If a student or staff comes to campus in an unacceptable face covering, a surgical face covering will be offered as a replacement for the day.

For staff, cloth facial coverings must be worn by every individual (except as described below). Staff who are verified to be fully vaccinated may be indoors without masks when they are alone in their office or classroom. 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 Face covering 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.
  - People with a medical condition, mental health condition, developmental or cognitive condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering. This includes, but is not limited to, people with a medical condition for whom wearing a face covering could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance.
  - 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 face coverings 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 and when they can be physically distanced outside. If students need a “face covering 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 face covering?**

In the midst of this community health crisis, our district believes that wearing a face covering 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 face covering 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.
- The district may exclude a student from in-person learning for refusing to wear an appropriate face covering.
- Parents will continue to be informed regarding any intervention or school discipline that may 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 face covering, 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.

## Recommended



Medical procedure masks (sometimes referred to as surgical masks or disposable face masks)



Masks that fit properly (snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face)



Masks made with breathable fabric (such as cotton)



Masks made with tightly woven fabric (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source)



Masks with two or three layers



Masks with inner filter pockets

## Not Recommended



Masks that do not fit properly (large gaps, too loose or too tight)



Masks made from materials that are hard to breathe through (such as plastic or leather)



Masks made from fabric that is loosely woven or knitted, such as fabrics that let light pass through



Masks with one layer



Masks with exhalation valves or vents



Wearing a scarf/ski mask

## CDC Recommended vs. Not Recommended Face coverings