

Face Covering Protocol for Students, Staff, & Visitors 2020-2021 School Year

On July 1, 2020, the PA Secretary of Health issued an [Order](#) requiring all individuals to wear a face covering when they leave their homes. This Order applies to any individual aged two and older whenever outside the home, including while in school entities, including public K-12 schools, brick and mortar and cyber charter schools, private and parochial schools, career and technical centers, and intermediate units; educational programming for students in non-educational placements such as residential settings (boarding schools), residential facilities, detention centers, and hospital settings; PA Pre-K Counts, Head Start Programs and Preschool Early Intervention programs; Private Academic Nursery Schools and locally-funded prekindergarten activities.

When worn properly, face covering helps reduce the spread of the coronavirus by reducing droplet transmission between people. As a reminder, face coverings do not replace the need to maintain social distancing, frequent hand washing, and our rigorous cleaning and disinfecting routines.

Approved Face Coverings

"Face covering" means a covering of the nose and mouth that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is wrapped around the lower face. A "face covering" can be made of a variety of synthetic or natural fabrics, including cotton, silk, or linen, and, for the purposes of the Order, can include a plastic face shield that covers the nose and mouth.

Please follow the guidance below for applying, removing, and cleaning the four types of masks approved for wear by school district staff, students, and visitors. Hand hygiene should be performed before and after applying and removing a mask.

Type and Intended Use of Coverings				
Approved Masks	Disposable Surgical Mask 	Cloth Mask 	Neck Gaiters 	Face Shields 
Mask Application (i.e. putting on your mask)	Hook loops snugly around ears. Ensure that mask covers nose and mouth at all times and is secured under the chin.	Secure ties to head or hook loops snugly around ears. Ensure that mask covers nose and mouth at all times and is secured under the chin.	Start with the gaiter on your neck, then pull it up to just below your eyes. Cover from nose to chin. Ensure that it fits snugly, especially around your cheeks and the bridge of your nose, not to leave gaps.	Bending forward, hold face shield with both hands, expand the elastic with thumbs and place the elastic behind head, so that the foam rests on forehead. Ensure the shield covers the front and sides of the face and no areas are left uncovered.

Mask Removal	Unhook from ears and pull away from face without touching the inside of the mask. Fold so the inner part of the mask faces inward. Dispose immediately into trash can.	Untie or unhook from ears and pull away from face without touching the inside of the mask. Fold so the inner part of the mask faces inward.	Remove from the back of your head, by putting your (clean) fingers under the neckline and lifting up from the bottom to top over your head.	Remove and pull up and away from face without touching the front of the mask. Check for cracks in the mask and discard if cracked or damaged.
Mask Cleaning	Dispose immediately into trash can.	Wash after daily use in washing machine with other laundry OR by hand soaking in a solution of 1/3rd cup of household bleach per gallon of room temperature water. Rinse clear. Place in the dryer or hang dry.	Wash after daily use in washing machine with other laundry OR by hand soaking in a solution of 1/3rd cup of household bleach per gallon of room temperature water. Rinse clear. Place in the dryer or hang dry.	Carefully wipe the inside, followed by the outside of the face shield with a disinfectant wipe.

General Guidance: School Staff and Visitors

- Face coverings, such as masks or face shields, must be worn by all non-students, both staff and visitors (including parents and guardians), while on school property, including during student drop-off and pickup.
- Individuals must wear a face covering (mask or face shield) unless they have a medical or mental health condition or disability, documented in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, that precludes the wearing of a face covering in school.
- Face coverings may be removed to eat or drink during breaks and lunch periods; however, at those times, social distancing must be practiced.
- Staff are not required to wear a face covering in situations where wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition to operate equipment or execute a task.
- Transparent face coverings provide the opportunity for more visual cues and should be considered as an alternative for younger students, students who are deaf and hard of hearing, and their teachers. Individuals who are communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing impaired or who has another disability, where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication, are not required to wear a mask; however, individuals should consider using another type of face covering such as a plastic face shield and increase physical distancing.
- Staff and Students should remain mindful not to unnecessarily touch masks except for removal for meals and breaks.
- When masks are removed, they must be placed below the chin, in a pocket or on the lap. Masks should not be placed on tabletops or other communal surfaces.

General Guidance: Students

- All students must wear a face covering (cloth mask or face shield) that covers their nose and mouth inside the school and while outside when physical distancing is not feasible.
- Children two years and older are required to wear a face covering unless they have a

medical or mental health condition or disability, documented in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or IDEA, that precludes the wearing of a face covering in school. Accommodations for such students should be made in partnership with the student's health care provider, school nurse, and IEP/504 team.

- Teach students and families how to properly wear a face covering (cover nose and mouth), to maintain hand hygiene when removing the face covering for meals and physical activity, and how to replace and maintain (washing regularly) a cloth face covering.
- Schools should provide face covering breaks throughout the day. Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet during these face covering breaks. Schools may allow students to remove face coverings when students are:
 - Eating or drinking when spaced at least 6 feet apart;
 - Seated at desks or assigned workspaces at least 6 feet apart;
 - Engaged in any activity at least 6 feet apart (e.g., face covering breaks, recess, etc.); or
 - When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.
 - Transparent face coverings provide the opportunity for more visual cues and should be especially considered as an alternative for younger students, students who are deaf and hard of hearing, and their teacher.

Resources

"Pennsylvania Department of Health Public Health Guidance Regarding COVID-19 Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools"

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/default.aspx#screening>

"Pennsylvania Department of Health Programs, Services and Health Information." *Department of Health*, www.health.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx.

"Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf." *Governor Tom Wolf*, 28 Apr. 2020, www.governor.pa.gov/.

"School Community Guidance and Resources." *Pennsylvania Department of Education*, www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx.