

COVID-19 Face Covering Guidance for Staff and Students

General Considerations for All

Face coverings (masks) are one of several mitigation strategies that the Douglas County School District (DCSD) is requiring to help stop the spread of COVID-19. When worn over the nose and mouth, face coverings help stop the spread of respiratory droplets from traveling through the air and landing on another person.

The on-campus experience depends on students, staff, and visitors following health and safety measures, and among the most important of those measures are social distancing and use of face coverings. Wearing face masks or cloth face coverings is required for all students, staff and visitors to campus in all indoor spaces and all enclosed or partially enclosed outdoor spaces.

Wearing a mask incorrectly (not covering the nose and mouth completely) is equivalent to not wearing a mask at all.

The CDC recommends that cloth or disposable face masks be worn in public settings. KN95 or N95 masks provide an added level of protection over the standard cloth and disposable masks.

Cloth masks should be 2 layers of tightly woven breathable fabric and fit snugly over the nose, mouth, and below the chin with no large gaps. Masks or face coverings made of mesh, toile, or loosely knit materials where light can show through will not be allowed.

Masks with one way valves are not acceptable in DCSD schools or sponsored events.

[Gaiters](#) used as masks have unknown efficacy, but if worn, they must have two layers of fabric.

Mask wearing is most effective when the majority of people participate. There will be few exceptions in schools for both staff and students. This is important to communicate to all, because there will be people who will be seen with their face coverings off for short periods of time, or will be using other mitigation strategies while instructing.

Mask breaks are a normal and necessary part of the day. Face coverings can be removed under the following circumstances:

- When eating lunch, masks may be removed if sitting 6 feet away from others.
- Taking a quick drink in a classroom is okay.
- Teachers may schedule mask breaks outside. [Here](#) are ideas for breaks.
- If you are alone in an office, you may remove your mask.
- If you are outside, and 6 feet away from students or staff

Masks or Face Coverings for Staff

Masks or face coverings over the nose and mouth are required indoors, including during in-person instruction and while with other students/adults (including faculty lounges and common areas). Respiratory conditions such as severe asthma, COPD, or a mental health diagnosis may require adaptations to face coverings. If this is the case, then the staff member should contact the DCSD Human Resources Office for information regarding an accommodation. Accommodation information is available on the DCSD website at www.dcsdk12.org/staffresources.

Staff may wear both a face covering over the nose and mouth and a clear face shield; but face shields alone may not be used as a substitute for a face covering. [Face Shields](#)

In some instances staff may need to switch to only a face shield or clear face covering over the nose and mouth. Appropriate circumstances for a face shield could include:

- when teachers deliver instruction to students who need to see how the mouth moves to make a sound,
- teaching students who are deaf or hard of hearing, students with autism, or English language learners.

In these cases teachers may remove face coverings over the nose and mouth for the shortest time necessary to deliver instruction while wearing a face shield, then replace the covering over the nose and mouth. Clear face masks over the nose and mouth may be worn the whole day. Staff must wash hands or use hand sanitizer before removing and replacing their face shield and/or mask.

Please read this document for Face Shield cleaning instructions: [Face Shield Cleaning](#)

Staff who work with a student who becomes ill at school will switch from a face covering to a KN95 mask to increase protection from respiratory droplets. Staff may also wear a face shield, gown and gloves, depending on the type of symptoms. School Nurse Consultants will train staff on proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which will be provided by DCSD.

Face Coverings for Students

Students will supply their own face coverings. If a student arrives at school without a face covering, one will be provided. Face coverings over the nose and mouth are required indoors, including during in-person instruction and while with other students and adults, unless a student cannot medically tolerate a face covering. Health conditions such as severe asthma or a mental health diagnosis may require adaptations to face coverings and layering of other mitigation strategies.

In appropriate circumstances, face shields will be made available to students. These could include: students who have a severe respiratory condition, or students who have a diagnosed mental health condition.

If a student requests any modification/accommodation to cover the nose and mouth, it will be coordinated and approved by the School Nurse Consultant and building administrators. A note from a health care provider will be considered in the accommodation process, but this does not guarantee the request will be approved. In some situations, the building nurse and administration may need more information regarding qualifying ADA accommodations and may consider beginning the Section 504 evaluation process.

Specific Classes

Physical Education Class: Under the current Public Health Order, face coverings need to be worn indoors at all times, but may be temporarily removed to catch a breath or to take a drink. If class is outdoors, face coverings may be removed, as long as there is at least 6 feet between students.

Choirs: All activities that include singing should take place outside as much as possible, and all participants should be at least 6 feet away or further from each other, facing the same direction, and wearing face coverings while both indoors and outdoors. Students should be prepared to have one face covering for music, and another for other classes. Singing poses a greater risk of spreading respiratory droplets if these precautions are not in place.

Theatre: Speaking loudly is also a higher risk activity. Face coverings should be worn at all times, even during a performance, with at least 6 feet between performers. Students should have one face covering for the class/performance and a separate face covering for other classes.

Band: Face coverings with slits are acceptable while playing a woodwind or brass instrument. Bell covers are required. Students should stand in the same direction and be 6 feet apart when playing, and play outside as much as possible.

CTE: Face coverings should be worn at all times during class, unless use of protective safety equipment such as a welding mask would interfere with wearing both.

Center-Based SSN and AN Students: Students in center-based programs who are unable to sustain mask wearing due to severe respiratory conditions, mental health conditions, or safety concerns (such as inability to remove the mask themselves) may have adaptations to the requirement. Students and families will work with their teacher or case manager to create a plan that combines the most mitigation strategies possible to limit exposure to respiratory droplets.

This may include social distancing, frequent hand washing, and use of a face shield and face covering by staff.

- Here is a resource for [Supporting Student PPE Compliance Using Through the CPI Crisis Development Model](#).
- Here is a [folder with social stories to use for teaching proper PPE and hygiene for COVID-19](#).

Consequences of Not Wearing a Face Covering

Face coverings will be considered as part of the dress code. Face coverings with offensive or political symbols or statements are not allowed in school. In the case that a student wears an inappropriate face covering, the student will be provided with a different face covering for the day, and parents will be called.

In general, students who do not comply with covering their nose and mouth and do not have a modification to that requirement documented by the School Nurse Consultant will meet with school administration.

Teachers and Administrators will use the following **guidance** to support the health and well-being of their students:

Students who decide not to comply:

- 1st Step: We will first work with the students and parents to educate them on the requirement to follow health and safety measures in Douglas County Schools.
- 2nd Step: We will contact the parent/guardian, provide official documentation of the requirement, and provide a final warning. When appropriate, other disciplinary responses in adherence with DCSD Code of Conduct policies will be enforced.
- 3rd Step: We will transfer the student from 100% in person learning to 100% e-Learning if they continue to make the choice not to comply with the requirement to follow DCSD health and safety measures.

In specific circumstances of student safety concerns, the school administrator can forgo steps within this process.