

## **Face Coverings**

### **Are face coverings required for staff, students, and visitors in school facilities?**

Yes. District staff, students, and visitors are required to wear face coverings except under the following circumstances:

- When doing so would inhibit the individual's health.
- When a student is in extreme heat outdoors.
- When a student is in water.
- If a student's documented medical condition, or disability as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), precludes the use of a face covering.
- If a student is under the age of two (2), due to the risk of suffocation.
- When a student is eating or drinking.
- If or when anyone has trouble breathing or is unconscious, is incapacitated, or is otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance (e.g., face coverings should not be worn by Pre-K students during nap time).
- The student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
- During gym and music classes when individuals are in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet apart (see number 2 below).
- When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task (for example, students operating machinery in which face coverings may get caught).

### **Are students required to wear face coverings during specials/electives such as music/choir or physical education?**

- Face coverings may be removed during physical education or music classes, provided individuals are in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet apart. Vigorous exercise, as well as music and choir classes in a confined space (e.g., indoors) may contribute to transmission of COVID-19 and should be limited. Consider conducting such activities in an area with greater ventilation or air exchange (e.g., outdoors). When students are not singing or playing an instrument that requires the use of their mouth, they should wear a face covering in music class (unless class is outdoors and distance can be maintained).

### **Who is responsible for supplying face coverings and other supplies to staff and students? Who should be notified if the district cannot acquire the necessary health and safety supplies needed for reopening? Is an enhanced level of PPE needed for school nurses and/or other staff who work more closely with students?**

- Face coverings may be provided by the student's family/guardian and can be included as part of the back to school supplies list provided to families/guardians prior to the start of school year. Schools should provide extra disposable face coverings for students who need them (e.g. students who forget or misplace their face coverings) and should provide face coverings for students that are experiencing financial hardship and are unable to afford them to the greatest extent possible.

- Districts should provide (in addition to normal supplies) any additional supplies/materials necessary for staff to do their jobs. For example, teaching staff, nursing staff, food service professionals, etc., should be provided with gloves, as necessary.
- The Road Back (p. 25-27) advises that special consideration should be given to protect staff members, such as school nurses, custodians, and some special education teachers, paraprofessionals and services providers, who will be in close contact with students or handle waste materials. As a resource, the Department's guidance also refers to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's memo regarding Guidance on Required Safety Supplies for Re-opening Schools, which provides additional information on the quantity and type of PPE materials for such staff members.

**How long should a face mask be used before it is replaced?**

- Based on updated reopening standards from the Department of Education, all students and staff are required to wear face coverings. Cloth face coverings are different than surgical face masks (which could also be worn but which are in short supply and should generally be reserved for healthcare workers). Cloth face coverings should be washed at the end of every day (sooner if they become wet or soiled). Single use disposable face masks should be changed daily unless they become damp or soiled, in this case they should be replaced immediately.

**Can staff and/or students wear face shields instead of face coverings?**

- Currently, the CDC does not recommend use of face shields as a substitute for face coverings. Therefore, they may not be used to satisfy face covering requirements. However, they may be an option for students with medical or other challenges that preclude the use of face coverings. If face shields are used without a mask, they should wrap around the sides of the wearer's face and extend to below the chin.