

808 COVID-19 FACE COVERING POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish requirements for employees, students, and other persons (including visitors, guests, contractors, etc.) present on education district property at all times to wear face coverings in classrooms, preschool, child care settings and other indoor areas, as well as outdoor areas where a physical distance of 6 feet cannot be maintained between persons, in order to minimize exposure to COVID-19.

II. GENERAL OF STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. The policy of the education district is to consider applicable face covering recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health and the Minnesota Department of Education.
- B. Face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer does not know they are infected.
- C. Unless an exception described in Part IV below applies, all students, staff, and other people present indoors in education district buildings and district offices or riding on education district transportation vehicles are required to wear a face covering.
- D. If and/or when the education district requires masking at any point during the 2021-22 school, due to board action, changing metrics or MDH guidance, then Subpart E is applicable.
- E. A violation of this policy occurs when any student, staff, or other person present in an education district building, in the education district office, or on an education district transportation vehicle fails to wear a face covering, unless an enumerated exception applies.

III. DEFINITION OF FACE COVERING

- A. A face covering must be worn to cover the nose and mouth completely, should not be overly tight or restrictive, and should feel comfortable to wear. The following are included in the definition of face covering:
 - 1. Paper or disposable mask;
 - 2. Cloth face mask;

3. Scarf;
 4. Neck gaiter;
 5. Bandana;
 6. Religious face covering; and
 7. Medical-grade masks and respirators
- B. A face shield is a clear plastic barrier that covers the face and allows visibility of facial expressions and lip movements for speech perception. A face shield should extend below the chin anteriorly, to the ears laterally, and there should be no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield's headpiece.
- C. Masks that incorporate a valve designed to facilitate easy exhaling, mesh masks, or masks with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design or material, or vents are not sufficient face coverings because they allow exhaled droplets to be released into the air.

IV. EXCEPTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES; TEMPORARY REMOVAL OF FACE COVERING

- A. Face coverings should not be placed on anyone under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance, or anyone who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a developmental, medical, or behavioral health condition.
- B. A face shield may be used as an alternative to a face covering in the following situations:
1. A student in grades kindergarten through eighth grade may wear a face shield when wearing a face covering is problematic.
 2. A teacher of any grade level may wear a face shield when wearing a face covering may impede the educational process.
 3. Staff, students, or visitors who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a developmental, medical, or behavioral health condition may wear a face shield instead of a face covering.
 4. Staff providing direct support student services may wear a face shield instead of a face covering when a face covering would impede the service being provided.

- C. Staff, students, and other people present in education district buildings or in district offices may temporarily remove their face covering or face shield in the following situations:
1. When engaging in classes, activities, or recess conducted outdoors, though people participating in these activities should maintain six feet of distance to the extent possible; (Note: If classes, activities or recess are conducted indoors, masks must be worn).
 2. During specific activities that the Minnesota State High School League has identified as exception to mask/face covering requirements.
 3. While receiving a service, including nursing, medical, or personal care services, that cannot be performed or is difficult to perform when the individual receiving the service is wearing a face covering;
 4. When the wearer needs to remove their face covering to eat or drink, though care should be taken to maintain as much space as possible between people while doing so;
 5. During indoor practices or performances involving singing, acting, public speaking, or playing musical instruments where a face covering cannot be used while playing the instrument, though people participating in these activities should maintain six feet of distance to the extent possible;
 6. When required by education district staff for the purposes of identification;
 7. Staff working alone in their offices, classrooms, vehicles, or job locations that have no person-to-person interaction;
 8. Staff working in communal spaces that have barriers such as Plexiglas or cubicle walls between employees that are above face level; or
 9. When communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing or has a disability, medical condition, or mental health condition that makes communication with a face covering difficult, provided that social distancing is maintained to the extent possible.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

- A. This policy will be conspicuously posted in each education district building and administrative office and communicated to students, staff, families, and potential visitors to the education district building.
- B. The education district will provide face coverings and/or face shields to employees and students. Employees and students may choose to wear their own face covering as long as it covers the nose and mouth. To the extent practicable, the education district will maintain an extra supply of face coverings for people who forget to bring their face covering.
- C. The education district will teach and reinforce the use of face coverings and/or face shields for students and staff throughout the education district day, including on transportation vehicles, inside education district buildings, and generally when on education district grounds.
- D. Individuals who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a medical condition or disability related condition may be permitted to utilize alternative options such as a face shield or other reasonable accommodation. The Executive Director or designee shall have discretion to determine whether an employee, parent, or community member qualifies for a reasonable accommodation and the accommodation to be provided. For a student with a medical condition or disability, the student's education team (i.e. IEP team, Section 504 team, health plan team) will determine whether the student qualifies for a reasonable accommodation and the accommodation to be provided. As a condition to granting a reasonable accommodation, the education district will require an individual to provide a physician's note from a licensed medical physician, medical doctor, physician's assistant, or licensed nurse practitioner. Requests for reasonable accommodations from the face covering requirement shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with applicable federal and state law.
- E. All face coverings shall meet the requirements of applicable dress code policies and/or codes of conduct. To the extent the face covering requirements of this policy conflict with MSBA Model Policy 504 – Student Dress and Appearance, this Policy shall control.

VI. ENFORCEMENT; CONSEQUENCES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

- A. In order to promote the health and safety of employees, students and members of the community, and make available a safe environment that is conducive to learning, compliance with this policy is necessary.
- B. Employees who fail or refuse to comply with this policy may be subject to

discipline, as appropriate, up to and including the termination of employment.

- C. Students who fail or refuse to comply with this policy may be subject to discipline or removal from education district property.

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 807 (Health and Safety Policy)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 504 (Student Dress and Appearance)