

FACE MASKS

Springfield Public Schools (the “District”) is committed to providing a safe environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks. Therefore, in accordance with guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice.

Face Mask Requirement

Except as otherwise stated herein, a face mask that covers a person’s nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, school offices, on school grounds when school is in session, and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed.¹ The face mask requirement applies to all District employees, students and visitors who enter a District building.

Students are prohibited from wearing face masks containing language or symbols that cause disruption or disorder within the school.

Exceptions from the Face Mask Requirement

Consistent with CDC’s guidance, the following students and individuals are exempt from the face mask requirement:

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- Students who have a medical, behavioral or other challenge making it unsafe to wear a face mask. In order to be exempt, the student’s parent/guardian must provide the Principal with a written note from the student’s physician that identifies the medical, behavioral or other challenge of the student that makes it unsafe for the student to wear a face mask. The Principal, in consultation with the school nurse, school occupational therapist or the Springfield Health and Human Services, will review the information and decide whether to approve the exemption. A written note from a parent/guardian requesting that the student be excused from wearing a mask is insufficient. If the exemption is approved, the Principal will discuss with the student’s parent/guardian other possible alternatives such as use of a face shield or physical barriers.
- Individuals who have trouble breathing or are unconscious, incapacitated or cannot remove the face mask without assistance.

¹ For appropriate types of masks see:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fschools-childcare%2Fcloth-face-cover.html

School Activities During which Face Masks are not Required

Students and staff will not be required to wear face masks during designated mask breaks and while eating or drinking. Depending on the activity and the ability to socially distance, students may not be required to wear face masks during physical education classes or during outside recess. Students participating in school sports will wear masks consistent with the MIAA requirements for the particular school sport. During nap time, pre-school students must remove their face masks.

Responsibility for Providing Face Masks

Parent/guardian of students are responsible for providing their child with a mask. District staff are responsible for providing their own facemasks. The District will supply disposable face masks for District staff and students who arrive at a building or board school transportation without a face mask. The District will provide student's families with information on properly wearing and removing masks and washing reusable masks.

Student Violation of Policy

If students are in violation of this policy, the District will follow its philosophy of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). For the safety of students and staff, the District may take one or more of the following actions:

- Educator will give the student verbal redirection in class
- Educator will conference with student in the hallway and review the expectations and purpose of mask wearing
- Counselor will conference with the student
- Principal will conference with the student
- Principal will contact parent/guardian to review expectations related to mask wearing and discussion of whether any alternatives or other options exist
- Principal reassigns the student to remote learning until such time as the student can comply with the mask requirement or the mask requirement is lifted

Staff Violation of Policy

Violations of this policy by District staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of Springfield School Committee policies.

Visitor Violation of Policy

Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to a District's building or instructed to leave the District's building or grounds.

This policy will remain in place until rescinded by the Springfield School Committee.

LEGAL REF.:

REFS: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Guidance for Wearing Masks
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face->

[cover-guidance.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fschools-childcare%2Fcloth-face-cover.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/cloth-face-cover.html)

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - September 21,
2020 Installment of FAQs: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/faq/>
Commonwealth of Massachusetts — Mask Up MA! —
<https://www.mass.gov/news/mask-up-ma>

SOURCE: MASC — August 2020

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