

Portage Public Schools

Protocol for Mask Wearing & Mask Breaks

This is a live document and may be updated based on new information and guidance

Reviewed 8/10/2020 8/20/2021 12/15/2021 2/18/2022

REQUIREMENTS OF PPS IN-PERSON

Every PPS Building Staff and Students must follow the Mask Wearing & Mask Break Requirements and Protocols listed below:

Face Coverings (Masks)

As of Monday, February 21, 2022, students and staff will no longer be required to wear a mask in any Portage Public School building. The District has made this decision based on the most recent updated Masking Guidance for Michiganders issued by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and supported by the Kalamazoo County Department of Health and Community Services.

We encourage you to read these documents to better understand the reasoning behind their decision. It is important to share that students and staff may choose to continue to wear masks and these individual choices should be respected by all. We recognize that there are students in younger grades who have not experienced school without a mask. Teachers and staff will work with all students to help make this transition, particularly at the lower elementary levels.

We will continue to follow the guidance for quarantining and masking after testing positive or being a close contact as that guidance remains the same. It is also important to know that masks are still required on buses and public transportation by order of the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

We thank you for your support and understanding as we continue to navigate this next phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

TYPES OF MASKS

1. **Cloth Face Coverings:** Cloth face coverings are masks made from material that are meant to cover your nose and mouth and to be secured under the chin and are not considered personal protective equipment (PPE). These are effective in reducing the spread of the virus.
2. **Surgical Masks:** Surgical masks were originally intended to be worn by health professionals and are considered personal protective equipment. It is not known if face shields provide any benefit as source control to protect others from the spray of respiratory particles. CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for masks.
3. **N95 or N95 respirator:** A N95 mask, also known as a respirator, filters particles that meet a certain standard for air filtration, meaning that it filters at least 95% of airborne particles. These are recommended only for use by healthcare personnel who need protection from both airborne and fluid hazards (e.g., splashes, sprays).

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MASK AVAILABILITY

We will have disposable masks available on each bus and at each school for students and staff as necessary.

MASK WEARING PROTOCOLS

- [How to Safely Wear and Take Off a Cloth Face Covering](#)
- Mask How To Video
- Mask How To & Guidelines

MASK WEARING RESOURCES

Social Stories and Songs

- [We Wear Masks Social Story](#)
- [Wear a Mask Social Story](#)
- [Mask Around Me!? Song](#)

ELEMENTARY MASK BREAK PROTOCOLS

1. Teacher must review mask break protocol before beginning the break
 - a. During the break make sure to use appropriate social distancing- stay in your seat
 - b. No visitors can enter or exit the classroom
 - c. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. You will need to put your mask back on to get up and throw it away then wash your hands
 - d. After our break we will put our masks back on, wash our hands, and the area will be disinfected
2. Teachers should make sure the break place has good airflow - open window, outdoors
3. The break should be with the group only - no visitors during this time.
4. At the end of the break review how to safely wear your face covering
 - a. Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
 - b. Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
 - c. Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
 - d. Make sure you can breathe easily
5. After break, wash hands and disinfect area (see disinfectant protocol)
 - a. Wash your hands, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds each time
 - b. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available

If a stMDHHSudent needs a break (mental, social/emotional) mask break protocol will be put in place.

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RESOURCES

Center for Disease Control, (2020). [CDC Considerations for Schools.](#)

[National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\)](#), [Division of Viral Diseases](#)

[Michigan Face Coverings Guidance for Non-Healthcare workers](#)

[Kalamazoo County Health Department COVID-19 Guidance](#) (Including mask Guidance.)

[Kalamazoo County Mask Order 8-18-2021](#)

[2/16/22 MDHHS Updated Masking Guidance](#)

[2/16/22 Kalamazoo County Health Department Updates](#)