

Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools

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Our schools are caring, creative, and equitable communities that empower all children to build on their talents and passions to grow into engaged citizens and life-long learners.

PURPOSE

Vermont has a [mask mandate](#) in place for every person in our state. The mandate reads:

As of Saturday, August 1, 2020, Vermonters and visitors are required to wear masks or cloth facial coverings over their nose and mouth any time they are in public spaces, indoors or outdoors, where they come in contact with others from outside their households, especially in congregate settings, and where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least six feet.

Masks or cloth facial coverings are not required when someone is engaged in strenuous exercise or activity, for anyone under the age of 2, any child or adult with a medical or developmental issue or challenge that is complicated or irritated by a facial covering, anyone with difficulty breathing or as further set forth in guidance issued by the Vermont Department of Health. A person who declines to wear a mask or cloth face covering because of a medical or developmental issue, or difficulty breathing, shall not be required to produce documentation, or other evidence, verifying the condition.

In addition, [A Strong and Healthy Start: Guidance for Vermont Schools](#) (revised 8/11/2020) states:

All staff and students are required to wear facial coverings while in the building. They must also wear them when outside of the building if adequate physical distancing cannot be maintained.

- *Adults doing drop-off and pick-up should wear facial coverings.*
- *Teach about and reinforce the use of cloth facial coverings among staff and students.*
- *Facial coverings are developmentally appropriate when children can properly put on, take off, and not touch or suck on the covering.*
- *Students who have a medical or behavioral reason for not wearing a facial covering should not be required to wear one. These decisions should be made in partnership with the health care provider and school nurse.*
- *Students/staff should not wear facial coverings while sleeping, eating or swimming (or when they would get wet)—reinforce physical distancing during these times.*
- *Facial coverings may be removed during outdoor activities where students and staff can maintain physical distancing and have ready access to put them back on as needed when activity stops.*
- *The use of clear facial shields for adults that cover the eyes, nose and mouth is less preferable, but allowable. They must meet all of the health guidance of the Vermont Department of Health. Face shields should extend below the chin and to the ears laterally, and there should be no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield's headpiece. Staff with minimal contact with students, and students should not wear face shields.*

MRPS employees and students will follow the guidelines set forth by these state mandates.

AVAILABILITY

All students should bring three masks to school each day. If the student forgets, masks will be available at school. Used masks need to be washed prior to wearing again.

EDUCATION

MRPS staff will use instructional time to teach students the importance of wearing a mask as well as the proper way to wear a mask. MRPS asks families to reinforce these concepts at home.

For assistance, please review these helpful reminders from the CDC [here](#) and [here](#).

REFUSAL

Students who are physically able to wear a mask and refuse are making a choice that endangers others. This is unacceptable. Should this happen, the following generalized consequences will be enforced (subject to variation depending on age level and school building. Please reference school specific student/family handbook):

First refusal:

Verbal reminder as to why it is important to wear a mask by the closest adult to the student. The student will be asked to immediately put their mask on.

Second refusal:

The student will be escorted to a space to have a longer conversation with an adult regarding the importance of wearing a mask for the protection of themselves and others. This conversation may be had by the school nurse, behavior specialist, and/or school administrator. The adult will make a phone call home to the parent/guardian to discuss the importance of wearing a mask.

The school could choose to host a restorative circle with the student and other students/adults to discuss the impact the student's decision to refuse to wear a mask has on others.

Third refusal:

The student will be sent home. Returning to school will not happen until a meeting between school administrator, nurse, student, and parent/guardian can be arranged. The meeting will focus on the importance of wearing a mask. The expectation is that the student will wear a mask without question going forward.

Final refusal:

Students in grade K-6 will be moved to the MRPS Virtual Academy. For students in grades 7-12, an individualized plan will be created for school to be done at home until such time that VTVC has availability for the student to partake in their virtual coursework. In either case, the student will not be allowed back on school grounds.

