

Face Mask Protocol for Students

July 2020

When worn properly, wearing a mask helps reduce the spread of the coronavirus by reducing droplet transmission between people. As a reminder, face masks do not replace the need to maintain social distancing, frequent hand washing, and our rigorous cleaning and disinfecting routines.

In accordance with Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH), and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), all School District of Philadelphia all students must wear a face mask that covers the mouth and nose at all times while in a District space (buildings, grounds, security desks, conference rooms, elevators, etc.).

APPROVED FACE MASKS

A mask is defined as a covering of the nose *and* mouth that is secured with straps that loop over the ears or tie around the back of the head. Acceptable masks may be factory-made, sewn by hand or machine, or created by using materials cut or constructed from household or clothing items like scarves, t-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels. These clothing items in their original forms are not themselves acceptable face coverings for use in District facilities and are not acceptable substitutes for the types of face coverings approved for use on school district premises.

Please follow the guidance below for applying, removing, and cleaning the masks approved for wear by school district students. Hand hygiene should be performed before and after applying and removing a mask.

Type and Intended Use of Masks			
Approved Masks	Disposable Surgical Mask	Cloth Mask	Face Shields
			
Mask Application (i.e. putting on your mask)	Hook loops snugly around ears. Ensure that mask covers nose and mouth at all times and is secured under the chin.	Secure ties to head or hook loops snugly around ears. Ensure that mask covers nose and mouth at all times and is secured under the chin.	Bending forward, hold face shield with both hands, expand the elastic with thumbs and place the elastic behind head, so that the foam rests on forehead. Ensure the shield covers the front and sides of the face and no areas are left uncovered.





Mask Removal	Unhook from ears and pull away from face without touching the inside of the mask. Fold so the inner part of the mask faces inward. Dispose immediately into trash can.	Untie or unhook from ears and pull away from face without touching the inside of the mask. Fold so the inner part of the mask faces inward.	Remove and pull up and away from face without touching the front of the mask. Check for cracks in the mask and discard if cracked or damaged.
Mask Cleaning	Dispose immediately into trash can.	Wash after daily use in washing machine with other laundry OR by hand soaking in a solution of 1/3rd cup of household bleach per gallon of room temperature water. Rinse clear. Place in the dryer or hang dry.	Carefully wipe the inside, followed by the outside of the face shield with a disinfectant wipe.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

- Students may wear personal, clean, well-maintained masks appropriate for the school environment that meet one of the approved face masks types identified in the chart above.
- Students must wear a face mask at all times in hallways, classrooms, public spaces and other common areas across district spaces.
- Students should remain mindful not to unnecessarily touch masks except for removal for meals and breaks.

Masks will be worn at all times and can be removed while eating. When masks are removed, they must be placed below the chin, in a pocket or on the lap. Masks should not be placed on tabletops or other communal surfaces.



DISTRIBUTION OF MASKS

Specific types of masks will be provided to students based on their grade and/or other factors. Disposable surgical masks will be available for students whose mask becomes damaged or lost or forgotten.

Role	Type	Quantity	Rationale
Students (Pre-K-Grade 5)	Face Shield Surgical Mask	2 per week 5 per week	Wearing a face mask may affect teaching and learning, especially for younger students who benefit from having their faces fully visible to the teachers. Students in lower grades will be provided face shields to wear throughout the day so that teachers can see their faces to facilitate learning of topics like phonics, assess behavioral moods, avoid barriers to instruction, and assist with classroom management.
Students (Grade 6-12)	Disposable Surgical Mask	5 per week	Wearing a surgical mask is the optimal choice to reduce the spread of the coronavirus by reducing droplet transmission between people.
Special Needs Students	Face Shield	2 per week	Wearing a face shield instead of a mask may increase compliance for students with medical conditions and behavioral challenges while still providing protection against virus transmission.

Accommodations for Students Who Are Unable to Wear a Mask Due to Medical Conditions or Other Reasons

Any student who cannot wear a mask or face shield due to a medical condition, including those with respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition, or disability, and students who would be unable to remove a mask without assistance are not required to wear face coverings.

Individuals who are communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing impaired or who has another disability, where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication, are not required to wear a mask; however, individuals should consider using another type of face covering such as a plastic face shield.

Students with the following conditions, as well as others, are eligible to use a face shield in place of a mask. This list is not exhaustive. Additional requests will be considered on an individual basis.

- Tracheostomies
- Neuromuscular and other conditions that limit the ability to self-remove a mask
- Autism
- Hearing Impairment
- Chronological young age
- Developmental young age



- Cognitive impairment
- Facial deformities that make mask wearing difficult

Prior to entering any school district facility, students who are unable to wear a mask on account of a health-related or other concern should contact Student Health Services via the school nurse for further instructions.