

Face Covering Guidelines for Students, Staff, and Visitors

2020-2021 School Year


On July 1, 2020, the PA Secretary of Health issued an [Order](#) requiring all individuals to wear a face covering when they leave their homes. This Order applies to any individual aged two and older whenever outside the home, including while in school entities, including public K-12 schools, brick and mortar and cyber charter schools, private and parochial schools, career and technical centers, and intermediate units; educational programming for students in non-educational placements such as residential settings (boarding schools), residential facilities, detention centers, and hospital settings; Pre-K Counts, Head Start, and Preschool Early Intervention programs; and private academic nursery schools and locally-funded prekindergarten activities.

When worn properly, medical research indicates that wearing a face covering helps reduce the spread of the coronavirus by reducing droplet transmission between people. As a reminder, face coverings do not replace the need to maintain physical distancing, frequent hand washing, and rigorous cleaning and disinfecting routines.

Approved Face Coverings

"Face covering" means a covering of the nose and mouth that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is wrapped around the lower face. A "face covering" can be made of a variety of synthetic or natural fabrics, including cotton, silk, or linen, and for the purposes of the Order, can include a plastic face shield that covers the nose and mouth.

Please follow the guidance below for applying, removing, and cleaning the four types of face coverings approved for wear by school district staff, students, and visitors. Hand hygiene should be performed before and after applying and removing a face covering.

Type and Intended Use of Face Coverings				
Approved Masks / Face Coverings	Disposable Surgical Mask	Cloth Mask	Neck Gaiters	Face Shields
Face Coverings / Mask Application (i.e., putting on your mask)				
	Hook loops snugly around your ears. Ensure that the mask covers your nose and mouth at all times and is secured under the chin.	Secure ties to head or hook loops snugly around ears. Ensure that the mask covers your nose and mouth at all times and is secured under the chin.	Start with the gaiter on your neck, then pull it up to just below your eyes. Cover from nose to chin. Ensure that it fits snugly, especially around your cheeks and the bridge of your nose, not to leave gaps.	Bending forward, hold face shield with both hands, expand the elastic with thumbs, and place the elastic behind your head so that the foam rests on your forehead. Ensure the shield covers the front and sides of your face and no areas are left uncovered.

Type and Intended Use of Face Coverings				
Face Coverings / Mask Removal	<p>Unhook from your ears and pull away from your face without touching the inside of the mask.</p> <p>Fold so the inner part of the mask faces inward.</p> <p>Dispose immediately into trash can.</p>	<p>Untie or unhook from your ears and pull away from your face without touching the inside of the mask.</p> <p>Fold to the inner part of the mask faces inward.</p>	<p>Remove from the back of your head by putting your (clean) fingers under the neckline and lifting up from the bottom to the top over your head.</p>	<p>Remove and pull up and away from your face without touching the front of the shield.</p> <p>Check for cracks in the shield and discard if cracked or damaged.</p>
Face Coverings / Mask Cleaning	<p>Dispose immediately into trash can.</p>	<p>Wash after daily use in washing machine with other laundry OR by hand soaking in a solution of 1/3 cup of household bleach per gallon of room temperature water. Rinse clear. Place in the dryer or hang dry.</p>	<p>Wash after daily use in washing machine with other laundry OR by hand soaking in a solution of 1/3 cup of household bleach per gallon of room temperature water. Rinse clear. Place in the dryer or hang dry.</p>	<p>Carefully wipe the inside, followed by the outside of the face shield with a disinfectant wipe.</p>

General Guidance – School Staff and Visitors:

- Face coverings, such as masks or face shields, must be worn by all non-students, both staff and visitors (including parents and guardians), while on school property, including during student drop-off and pickup. The following are suggestions regarding face coverings:
 - Carry at least two face coverings each day in the event one gets soiled or misplaced.
 - Label each face covering with your name so it can be returned in the event it gets misplaced.
 - Mark the inside top of the face covering to assist you to place it correctly on your face each time.
- Individuals must wear a face covering (mask or face shield) unless they have a medical or mental health condition or disability, documented in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, that precludes the wearing of a face covering in school.
- Face coverings may be removed to eat or drink during breaks and lunch periods; however, at those times, physical distancing must be practiced.
- Staff are not required to wear a face covering in situations where wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition to operate equipment or execute a task.
- Transparent face coverings provide the opportunity for more visual cues and should be considered as an alternative for younger students, students who are deaf and hard of hearing, and their teachers. 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 and increase physical distancing.
- Staff and students should remain mindful not to unnecessarily touch face coverings except for removal for meals and breaks.
- When face coverings are removed, they must be placed below the chin, in a pocket or on the lap, or in an individually labeled container such as a paper bag, zipped plastic bag, or plastic storage container. Face coverings should not be placed on tabletops or other communal surfaces.

General Guidance – Students:

- All students must wear a face covering (cloth mask or face shield) that covers their nose and mouth inside the school and while outside when physical distancing is not feasible. The following are suggestions for families regarding students' face coverings:
 - Supply at least two face coverings each day in the event one gets soiled or misplaced.
 - Label each face covering with your child's name so it can be returned in the event it gets misplaced.
 - Mark the inside top of the face covering to assist your child to place it correctly on their face each time.
- Children two years and older are required to wear a face covering unless they have a medical or mental health condition or disability, documented in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or IDEA, that precludes the wearing of a face covering in school. Accommodations for such students should be made in partnership with the student's health care provider, school nurse, and IEP/504 team.
- Students and families should be taught how to properly wear a face covering (over nose and mouth), to maintain hand hygiene when removing the face covering for meals and physical activity, and how to replace and maintain (washing regularly) a cloth face covering.
- Schools should provide face covering breaks throughout the day maintaining a distance of at least six feet apart. Schools may allow students to remove face coverings when students are:
 - Eating or drinking when spaced at least six feet apart;
 - Seated at desks or assigned workspaces at least six feet apart;
 - Engaged in any activity at least six feet apart (e.g., face covering breaks, recess, etc.); or
 - When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.
 - Transparent face coverings provide the opportunity for more visual cues and should be especially considered as an alternative for younger students, students who are deaf and hard of hearing, and their teacher.
- When face coverings are removed, they must be placed below the chin, in a pocket or on the lap, or in an individually labeled container such as a paper bag, zipped plastic bag, or plastic storage container. Face coverings should not be placed on tabletops or other communal surfaces.

Sources:

- "Pennsylvania Department of Health Public Health Guidance Regarding COVID-19 Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools" <https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/default.aspx#screening>
- "Pennsylvania Department of Health Programs, Services and Health Information." *Department of Health*, www.health.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx.
- "Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf." *Governor Tom Wolf*, 28 Apr. 2020, www.governor.pa.gov/.
- "School Community Guidance and Resources." *Pennsylvania Department of Education*, www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx.