

## FACE COVERINGS/MASKS

Code **ADD** Proposed **8-9-2021**

To reduce the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that a face covering/mask be worn in public settings when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. The district will consider the circumstances in the community and consult local health officials for the implementation of this policy.

### Definitions

A *face covering/mask* is a piece of fabric, cloth, or other material that covers the wearer's nose, mouth, and chin simultaneously and is secured to the wearer's face by elastic, ties, or other means. Acceptable face coverings/masks may be homemade, and they may be reusable or disposable.

~~Masks with one-way valves or vents will not be allowed based on CDC recommendations.~~

The district encourages students, staff and visitors on campuses to wear face coverings/masks while indoors or when physical distancing is not possible.

### Staff Members

~~In compliance with public health guidelines during a pandemic, staff members will wear a face covering/mask while on district property or conducting business on behalf of the district (e.g. driving a bus, conducting a home visit, supervising athletic events, etc.). Staff members include, but are not limited to, salaried and hourly employees, school volunteers, student teachers, and interns. The district will provide masks to staff members and expects that reusable masks will be washed regularly to ensure maximum protection. The district will provide staff members, with the exception of bus drivers, with a Consent to Opt Out of Face Covering Requirements and Legal Release form to waive this policy on district property. This form does not apply to school buses or activity buses pursuant to federal requirements.~~

~~However, for practical purposes face coverings/masks may be removed on a limited basis for, the following:~~

- ~~• mealtimes~~
- ~~• outdoor activities and recess~~
- ~~• anyone who has trouble breathing due to a medical emergency~~
- ~~• anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance~~
- ~~• when faculty and staff are in their office/classroom alone~~

### Students

~~In compliance with public health guidelines during a pandemic, all students in Pre-K through 12th grade will wear face coverings/masks while on district property, on district transportation, or while attending a school-related activity (e.g. athletic events, etc.). The district will provide masks to students who are not able to provide their own and expects that reusable masks will be washed regularly to ensure maximum protection.~~

However, for practical purposes face coverings/masks may be removed on a limited basis for, the following:

- mealtimes
- outdoor activities and recess of less than fifteen (15) minutes
- administration of medication
- children younger than two years old
- anyone who has trouble breathing due to a medical emergency
- anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance
- Pre-K students during naptime
- mask breaks will be permitted at each level as specified below when in class or a space that allows for being seated, and maintains six feet social distance
  - elementary school students may be permitted a facemask break for up to ten (10) minutes each hour during the school day
  - middle and high school students may be permitted a facemask break for up to ten (1) minutes during each period/block
- during physical education classes while maintaining six feet social distance
- during band class where instruments require the use of a mouthpiece
- when faculty and staff are in their office/classroom alone
- parent/guardian signature to opt out of face coverings on the DHEC Consent Form to Opt Out of Face Mask Requirement Imposed on Students by a School District. Pursuant to the executive order, No. 2021—23, issued by Governor Henry McMaster on May 11, 2021, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has developed a standardized form to provide consent for or on behalf of a student in any public school in the state of South Carolina to opt out from a face covering requirement pertaining to school operations and facilities. This form does not apply to school buses or activity buses pursuant to federal requirements. A parent or guardian signature is required for students to opt out of the face covering policy. Students at age 18 or older are authorized to give their consent.

## Visitors

Visitors to district property will be limited in accordance with administrative rule KI-R, *Visitors* and the recommendations provided by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) and the CDC. Visitors include, but are not limited to, parents/legal guardians, school volunteers, contract service providers, and delivery persons. Visitors will wear a face covering/mask while on district property when unable to social distance indoors. Visitors will be asked to leave district property if they refuse to wear a face covering/mask. All efforts will be made to keep necessary visitors to a minimum, including the use of virtual or telephone meetings with families and guests. Parents/Legal guardians meeting on-site with school staff must follow social distancing guidelines and wear masks when appropriate.

## Harassment and Bullying

The district will not tolerate harassment of anyone wearing face coverings/masks or those **not wearing face coverings/mask** with a completed DHEC consent form to opt out and will appropriately discipline students, staff members, or visitors who engage in **such** behavior that interferes with any student or staff member's ability to comply with this policy.

## Discipline

Failure or refusal to wear a face covering/mask by a staff member or student, who has not completed the required DHEC consent form to opt out, may result in discipline in accordance with district policy and codes of conduct, as applicable.

This policy is intended to be effective until further notice and to align with district policies

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~~including, but not limited to, student and staff dress codes. To the extent this policy does not align, it will supersede others in accordance with applicable laws and regulations in effect at the time. For clarification on potential conflicts between policies, the interpretation of the superintendent or his/her designee is final.~~

The board authorizes the superintendent to amend these ~~requirements~~ **recommendations** as necessary to meet health and safety guidelines. ~~The superintendent has discretion to lessen the number and duration of mask breaks or to eliminate mask breaks entirely on a district-wide, school, or classroom level. Such decisions may be made for a number of reasons, including but not limited to the absence of desk shields in a classroom, an increase in the number of students in a classroom, an increase in community virus spread, or emerging hotspots in specific schools or classrooms.~~

Adopted 8/24/20; Revised 9/28/20; 5/13/21

## References

CDC Vents and Valves:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

Guidance for K-12 School Administrators on the Use of Cloth Face Coverings in Schools:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/cloth-face-cover.html#:~:text=CDC%20recommends%20that%20people%2C%20including,measures%20are%20difficult%20to%20maintain.>

SCDHEC COVID-19 Interim Guidance for School Operations:

[https://www.scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/School\\_Operations\\_COVID-19\\_Interim%20Guidance-5.18.20.pdf](https://www.scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/School_Operations_COVID-19_Interim%20Guidance-5.18.20.pdf)

SCDHEC Use of Cloth Face Coverings (COVID-19):

<https://www.scdhec.gov/infectious-diseases/viruses/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/use-cloth-face-coverings-covid-19>

\*Remote Learning- means educational or instructional programming that mostly occurs away from the physical school building and is delivered in a student-focused manner that addresses a student's educational needs. This includes both non-technology-based learning (e.g., paper packets, in-person tutoring) and "distance education" as defined in ESEA section 8101(14).