

USE OF FACE COVERINGS

Recognizing the importance of face coverings (masks) as one of the comprehensive measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Board directs the Superintendent to work with the local health department to develop procedures, considering the guidance provided by the Ohio Department of Health and all the available science, for the use of face coverings in the District, at activities under the control of the District and on District provided transportation. The use of face coverings is one part of the comprehensive plan in place for students and staff health.

Recognizing that available scientific information and local needs may change, the Board authorizes the Superintendent to continue to review and adjust face covering procedures in consultation with health officials. All face covering procedures and any changes to procedures must be clearly communicated to all staff, volunteers, parents and students in a timely manner. At no time may the Superintendent require any less for face coverings than may be required by law or health department requirement.

At minimum, face coverings should be cloth/fabric and be properly worn to cover an individual's nose, mouth, and chin.

Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers who do not meet one of the listed exceptions are required to wear face coverings in the work setting unless it is unsafe to do so or doing so would significantly interfere with the learning process. Exceptions include:

1. Facial coverings in the school setting are prohibited by law or regulation;
2. Facial coverings are in violation of documented industry standards;
3. Facial coverings are not advisable for health reasons;
4. Facial coverings are in violation of the school's documented safety policies;
5. Facial coverings are not required when the staff works alone in an assigned work area;
6. There is a functional (practical) reason for a staff member or volunteer to not to wear a facial covering in the workplace.

The District must provide written justification to local health officials, upon request, explaining why a staff member is not required to wear a face covering in the school.

School nurses or staff who care for individuals with symptoms must use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) provided by the District in accordance with all current Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.

Students

The Board directs the Superintendent to work in consultation with local health officials to develop detailed procedures for the use of face coverings by students that consider all available science. In drafting these procedures, the Superintendent will take into consideration currently available guidance from state and local health departments with the understanding that this guidance will continue to change over time. These procedures must address the use of face coverings by students in all environments under control by the District as well as requirements based on age or grade level for student use of face coverings. The procedures provide direction for parents when there is a health or developmental reason for which a student cannot wear a face covering. The District will take steps to reduce any social stigma for students who, for medical or developmental reasons, cannot and should not wear a face covering.

Additional considerations

The District provides staff training and age appropriate instruction for students on appropriate use of face coverings and PPE.

The Board directs the Superintendent to develop procedures for when face shields may be considered as a preapproved alternative where cloth face coverings would hinder the learning process, including but not limited to the following situations:

1. When interacting with students, such as those with disabilities, where communication could be impacted;
2. When interacting with English-language learners or when teaching a foreign language;
3. In settings where cloth face coverings might present a safety hazard (i.e., science labs);
4. For individuals who have difficulty wearing a cloth face covering.

The Board directs the Superintendent to develop procedures for face coverings for all visitors, contractors and other individuals on District property in addition to the procedures addressed herein for employees, volunteers and students. Such procedures must be appropriately communicated.

(Permissive language)

The Board directs the Superintendent to determine the need for disposable face coverings to be provided in buildings where appropriate and necessary.

[Adoption date:]

LEGAL REF.: ORC 3313.20(A)

CONTRACT REFS.: Teachers' Negotiated Agreement
Support Staff Negotiated Agreement

NOTE: *In light of the COVID-19 pandemic the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) COVID-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools requires all schools to adopt a policy on the use of face coverings as one of the comprehensive measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These policies must consider all the available science.*

All staff and volunteers must wear face coverings unless otherwise exempted as outlined in the policy above.

At minimum, face coverings must cover the nose, mouth and chin. Face shields may be an option in areas outlined in the above policy language.

This policy alone does not meet the requirements for addressing all aspects governing the use of face coverings in the district.

Districts should work with their local health departments to develop the detailed procedures for students and document these procedures at the district level, thereby giving the Superintendent flexibility to revise as may be necessary.

According to the ODH guidance, face coverings for students in grades 3-12 are "strongly recommended." The majority opinion among experts appears to be that children kindergarten through 5th grade can wear face coverings as long as consideration is given for the age and developmental level of the child and the physical situation the child is in at that moment.

When developing student procedures, districts should work closely with their local health department to address the use in all environments controlled by the district including but not limited to:

- *Transportation*
- *Common areas (cafeteria, hallways, gymnasiums)*
- *Classrooms*
- *Extracurricular activities (including athletics)*
- *Course specific requirements (band, labs, physical education, choir, etc.)*

When establishing employee procedures districts must be cognizant of any potential bargaining implications.