



# The East Cleveland City Schools K-12

## Approved Board Agenda Item & Face Covering Policy

**Whereas**, Covid-19 is a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death that is caused by SARS-Co V-2 virus, which is a new strain of coronavirus that had not been previously identified in humans and can easily spread from person to person. The virus is spread between individuals who are in close contact with each other (within six feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that individuals can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or eyes; and

**Whereas**, on January 31, 2020, health and Human Services Secretary, Alex M. Azar II, Declared a public health emergency for the United States to aid the nation’s healthcare community in responding to COVID-19; and

**Whereas**, on March 9, 2020, testing by the Department of Health confirmed that three (3) patients were positive for COVID-19 in the State of Ohio. This confirmed the presence of a potentially dangerous condition which may affect the health, safety and welfare of citizens of Ohio; and

**Whereas**, on March 9, 2020, a State of Emergency in Executive Order 2020-01D was declared by Governor Mike DeWine; and

**Whereas**, on August 4, 2020, the Ohio Children’s Hospital Association and the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended in part that all children in Kindergarten through grade twelve (12) wear a mask while in educational settings; and

**Whereas**, on August 8, 2020 Governor Mike DeWine, of the State of Ohio, signed the Executive Order approving the recommendation of the Ohio Children’s Hospital Association and the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics that all children, in part, in Kindergarten through grade twelve (12) wear a mask while in educational settings; and that

**Furthermore**, that the order was signed on August 8, 2020, in Cedarville, Ohio, and it will expire one hundred and twenty (120) days from the effective date of the emergency rule, or upon the adoption of the rule through the normal Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review process, whichever is sooner; therefore, be it

**Resolved that the following Mask Wearing policy be approved for the East Cleveland City School District**

Approved September 14, 2020



# The East Cleveland City Schools K-12 Face Covering Policy

**All East Cleveland City School District (ECCSD) staff, volunteers and students (Kindergarten through grade 12) must wear a cloth mask while in ECCSD educational settings.**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) affects every individual differently. COVID-19 can be spread to others even if you do not feel sick. People can be infected with the virus without realizing it (an asymptomatic infection). Wearing a cloth face covering/mask helps prevent a person who is sick from spreading the virus to others, but only if worn properly, covering both one's nose and mouth. Appropriate and consistent use of cloth face coverings is most important when students, teachers, and staff are indoors and when social distancing of at least 6 feet is difficult to implement or maintain.

**As both a safeguard and precaution to slow the spread of COVID-19:**

- All school employees will wear cloth face coverings unless it is unsafe to do so, or where doing so would significantly interfere with the learning process.
- All students must wear cloth face coverings while participating in the on grounds educational environment.

Coverings (cloth face masks and/or face shields) will be provided by the District for all employees and for any student needing one.

Cloth face coverings should **not** be placed on:

- Children younger than 2 years old.
- Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious.
- Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.

**In conjunction with the Governors' COVID-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools and guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) the following guidelines have been established for the reopening of schools.**

**Face mask protocol:**

Cloth face coverings are to be appropriate for the school setting, same as other clothing as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Coverings must cover the nose and mouth, fit snugly, not create difficulty breathing while worn, and be held securely with elastic, etc. to prevent slipping.

## Cloth Face coverings:

- Must be worn on the school bus.
  - Students in grades K-12 riding school buses are required to wear a face covering.
  - Bus riders are to put the face covering on before boarding the bus and keep it on until exiting the bus.
  - Coverings will be made available to riders without one.
  - To the greatest extent possible, seating charts will be maintained with one student per seat, except for siblings (which may occupy a seat together).
  - Bus riders (nonexempt) unable or unwilling to comply with this requirement will need to find other means of transportation to/from school.
- Must be worn in the classrooms
  - Once in the classroom or designated work space, students and employees are permitted to remove face coverings as long as proper physical distancing is in place.
- Must be worn in Hallways and during Transitions (in the Building)
  - Face coverings are to be worn by all employees and students during times of transition (in hallways or when moving throughout the building) or anytime the physical (social) distancing cannot be maintained.

**Note:** Wearing masks is crucial to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Almost all people, including young children, can wear face coverings and surgical/cloth masks safely.

## Recognized adaptations and alternatives

### Clear Face Coverings

While cloth face coverings are strongly encouraged to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the CDC recognizes there are specific instances when wearing a cloth face covering may not be feasible. In these instances, parents, guardians, caregivers, teachers, and school administrators should consider the use of **clear face coverings** that cover the nose and wrap securely around the face may be used by some teachers and staff. Clear face coverings should be determined not to cause any breathing difficulties or overheating for the wearer.

- **Teachers and staff who may consider using clear face coverings include:**
  - Those who interact with students or staff who are deaf or hard of hearing, per the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
  - Teachers of young students learning to read
  - Teachers of students in English as a second language classes
  - Teachers of students with disabilities
- **Clear face coverings are not face shields. The Center for Disease Control (CDC)** does **not** recommend the use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings because of a lack of evidence of their effectiveness for source control.

### Face Shields

- Face shields that wrap around the face and extend below the chin can be considered as an alternative where cloth face coverings would hinder the learning process.
  - When interacting with students, such as those with disabilities, where communication could be impacted
  - When interacting with English-language learners or when teaching a foreign language
  - Settings where cloth masks might present a safety hazard (i.e., science labs)
  - For individuals who have difficulty wearing a cloth face covering.

## Mask Policy - Exceptions

School staff must wear face coverings unless it is unsafe to do so or where doing so would significantly interfere with the learning process. Employers and employees are not required to wear face coverings if it is not advised due to health reasons, against documented industry best practices, prohibited for a specific position by law or regulation, or a violation of a District safety policy. A face covering also is not required if an employee is working alone in an enclosed workspace or if there is a practical reason one cannot be worn. If any of these exceptions apply, written justification must be provided upon request.

### Exceptions include:

- Facial coverings in the school setting are prohibited by law or regulation
- Facial coverings are in violation of documented industry standards
- Facial coverings are not advisable for health reasons
  - Staff must provide written justification to the District from their healthcare provider regarding this exception.
  - We (ECCSD) must provide written justification to local health officials, upon request, explaining why a staff member is not required to wear a facial covering in the school.
  - **A request for an exception must be formal (in writing) and reviewed and approved by the Chief Operating Officer or his designee.**
- Facial coverings are in violation of the school's documented safety policies
- Facial coverings are not required when the staff works alone in an assigned work area
- There is a functional (practical) reason for persons not to wear a facial covering in the District.
- In highly specialized areas such as band, choir, art, PE, etc., specialized action plans must be developed to mitigate the specific area of concern.

**Note:** in these instances, it is essential that social Distancing be maintained

### Exemptions

1. Children under the age of 5 years
2. Any child unable to remove the face covering without assistance
3. A child with a significant behavioral/psychological issue undergoing treatment that is exacerbated specifically by the use of a facial covering (e.g. severe anxiety or a tactile aversion)
4. A child living with severe autism or with extreme developmental delay who may become agitated or anxious wearing a mask
5. A child with a facial deformity that causes airway obstruction

Beyond these categories, there are no diagnoses that warrant blanket exemptions from wearing a face covering/mask.

**Specifically**, asthma, allergies and sinus infections are not a contraindication for using a face covering/mask.