

## **FACE COVERINGS**

The Mansfield Public Schools is committed to providing a safe environment during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Maintaining a safe environment is critical to the District's ability to return students to a full-time classroom learning experience.

According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of corona virus and to keep members of our school community safe is the correct use of face coverings or masks. Therefore, using the guidance and recommendations from the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice.

The Superintendent shall develop administrative procedures to support the implementation of this policy, including but not limited to, extracurricular activities, athletics, performing arts, types of face-coverings, alternatives to masks, and "mask-breaks", using guidance and recommendations from the CDC, DESE, DPH, and local agencies.

### **Required Masking Indoors**

Until further notice, all students in grades K – 12+, employees, and visitors (except children under 2 years) – regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status – must wear a face covering or mask while indoors in any school or district building, even when social distancing is observed. Students at Roland Green Pre-School are encouraged to wear a face covering at the discretion of their parents.

Passengers and drivers are required to wear a face covering/mask on school-provided transportation, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status.

Face coverings/masks can be removed under the following circumstances:

- For meals or scheduled classroom snack times, when actively eating or drinking.
- For "mask breaks", as determined by a teacher or school administrator.
- When alone in a workspace.

Masks must cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly against the side of the face, with no gaps. If a student, staff, or visitor does not have appropriate face covering, they will be provided with one by the school district.

Reasonable accommodations will be made for individuals with disabilities and underlying health conditions that prevent them from wearing masks, as necessary and appropriate.

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### **Outdoor Mask Requirements**

Face coverings are not required outdoors, regardless of vaccination status. However, schools should support students, staff, and visitors who voluntarily choose to wear face coverings outdoors for any reason, and individual decisions to wear a mask outdoors should be respected.

### **Exemptions**

Individuals may be excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons, per CDC guidance:

- An individual who has trouble breathing; is unconscious; is incapacitated; or cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance.

Further exemptions may occur:

### **For Students**

- For students who have a medical condition or other disability that may prevent the safe wearing of face coverings and who are currently receiving accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Parents/guardians of students currently served under Section 504 or IDEA should consult with school administrators.
- As determined by the school administrator in consultation with the school nurse, upon review of a documented medical condition verified by the student's physician and a written request ~~note~~ from the student's physician for a medical exemption.
- Due to special behavioral or individualized needs as determined by the school administrator.
- On a case-by-case basis for specific instructional needs and other activities, as determined by a teacher, coach, or administrator.
- Parents/guardians may not excuse their child from the face-covering requirement by signing a waiver.

### **For Employees**

- An employee may request a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other statutes, through the Office of Human Resources, if the employee has a documented medical, physical, or psychological contraindication that prevents them from being able to wear a face covering.

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### **Enforcement**

All students and employees are expected to comply with the face covering requirements above and accompanying administrative procedures for the health and safety of the school community and others.

### Students

If students are in violation of this policy or accompanying administrative procedures, the building principal will consult with the parent/guardian to determine whether an exemption is appropriate. Failure to wear a mask or comply with mask procedures may result in loss of privilege to visit school grounds and buildings, will not be eligible for participation in athletics, performing arts, or other extracurricular activities, and may be subject to additional disciplinary action. Refusal to wear a mask will be considered insubordination and will be subject to the Code of Conduct outlined in the student handbook.

### Employees

Violations of this policy or accompanying administrative procedures by employees will be handled in the same manner as other violations of School Committee policy and will be subject to disciplinary procedures as outlined in the employee's respective collective bargaining agreement.

### Visitors

Visitors and guests of the Mansfield Public Schools must comply with all guidance, direction, and requirements regarding mask wearing, including at school events. Members of the public and visitors will be reminded that face coverings are required while inside a school/district facility. Visitors in violation of this policy or accompanying administrative procedures will be denied entry to the school/district facility or asked to leave the school/district facility.

This policy will remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee. It will be reviewed monthly or more frequently by the Superintendent, as new regulations, information, and guidance become available from the CDC, OSHA, MA DESE, MA DPH, and other federal, state, and local agencies. The Superintendent may modify administrative procedures as new regulations, information, and guidance become available from the CDC, OSHA, MA DESE, MA DPH, and other federal, state, and local agencies and will communicate any changes to this policy or procedures to the school community in a timely manner.

In the event additional requirements are mandated by local, state or federal authority, those requirements will supersede this policy, to the extent that any provision of this policy is in conflict or inconsistent with those requirements.

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### GUIDANCE STATEMENTS:

**Massachusetts Department of Public Health**

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/updated-advisory-regarding-masks-and-face-coverings-july-30-2021-0/download>

**Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools Updated August 5, 2021 -**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>

**Center for Disease Controls – Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention on Public Transportation**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html>

**Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – Fall 2021 Covid-19 Guidance**

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2021-0825mask-requirement.pdf>

SOURCE: MASC August 2020 / August 2021

Revised: August 24, 2021

Reviewed: April 27, 2021

Adopted: September 1, 2020