

Pandemic Preparedness and Management: Face Coverings

General Rule – Face Coverings Required

Consistent with the Governor’s Executive Order and Guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), all individuals (vaccinated and unvaccinated) present in any District building or facility shall at all times wear a face covering when indoors, regardless of physical distancing, unless a specific exemption applies (see below). Furthermore, all individuals (vaccinated and unvaccinated) present in transportation vehicles (i.e., buses) owned, operated, or used by the District shall at all times wear a face covering, even when physical distancing is maintained, unless a specific exemption applies.

When Face Coverings May Be Removed

Face coverings are not required or may be removed when:

1. Individuals are eating and/or drinking in spaces and at times so designated;
2. Individuals are outside;
3. Individuals are using a face shield when other methods of protection are not available or appropriate, and such is approved by the District;
4. Children are napping with close monitoring;
5. Staff members are alone in their office or classroom with the door closed;
6. Fully vaccinated staff are meeting with other fully vaccinated staff outside of settings where unvaccinated persons are present; and
7. Individuals are younger than 2 years of age, have trouble breathing, or are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.

Confirmation of Vaccination Status

The District reserves the right to require confirmation of an individual’s vaccination status, which may include presentation of the individual’s vaccination card. Individuals who choose not to present confirmatory proof of their vaccination status may be regarded as unvaccinated for purposes of this policy and other Covid-19 protocols.

Reasonable Accommodations

Individuals who cannot wear a face covering due to a medical condition or disability related condition, or who present other bona fide reasons for not being able to wear a face covering, may be permitted to utilize alternative options such as a face shield or other reasonable accommodation. The Superintendent or designee shall have discretion to determine whether an employee, visitor, or third-party individual qualifies for a reasonable accommodation. For a student with a medical condition or disability, the student’s education team (i.e., IEP team, 504 team, health plan team) will determine whether the student qualifies for a reasonable accommodation and the accommodation to be provided. As a condition to granting a reasonable accommodation, the District will require an individual to provide a physician’s note and/or other relevant information, documents, or certifications with respect to the condition or circumstance. Requests for reasonable accommodations from the face covering requirement shall be assessed in accordance with applicable state and federal law.

What Constitutes A Face Covering

For purposes of this section, “face covering” means a cloth face covering with two or more layers, a N95 mask, or a surgical mask, that fully covers the nose and mouth, is secured under the chin, fits snugly against the sides of the face without gaps, and is approved by the CDC.

Consequences for Violating Policy

An individual’s refusal to wear a face covering in accordance with this policy shall constitute a violation of the District’s applicable rules of conduct and may subject the individual to disciplinary action and/or prevent the individual from entering the District’s buildings, facilities or transportation vehicles until the individual complies with this policy. Any visitor that refuses to comply with this policy may also be subject to a prohibition from accessing District buildings and facilities in the future. Face covering designs and images must comply with any applicable District student appearance policy and must not disrupt the educational process, interfere with the maintenance of a positive teaching/learning climate, or compromise reasonable standards of health, safety, and decency. The Superintendent or designee shall apply and enforce this policy.

Application and Duration of Policy

This policy shall apply any time the Governor’s Executive Order requires or the CDC, ISBE and/or IDPH Guidance recommends that face coverings be used in Illinois schools. Except that upon any change in or withdrawal of said Executive Orders and Guidance, the School Board hereby delegates to the Superintendent authority to establish temporary rules and procedures, and/or to suspend this policy or any portion thereof, consistent with such change or withdrawal.

CROSS REF.: 4:180 (Pandemic Preparedness; Management; and Recovery),

ADOPTED: August 17, 2021