

FACE COVERINGS

The Abington Public Schools are committed to providing a safe environment as schools reopen during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks or face coverings. Therefore, in accordance with guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice.

A face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, on school grounds and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed. PreK students are not required to wear a mask, but strongly encouraged to wear one.

Face coverings must:

- *cover the nose and mouth*
- *fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face*
- *be able to remain securely in place*
- *include multiple layers of fabric*
- *allow for breathing without restriction*
- *be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape with the exception of disposable masks*

Mask will be removed at different points throughout the day like during mask breaks at 6 or more feet in distance between students and staff, lunch and to drink water.

There may be exceptions to this policy under certain circumstances, such as for students with medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear masks. A written note from a physician is required for a requested exemption and must be approved by the building principal in consultation with the school nurse or local Board of Health. Face shields or physical barriers are strongly suggested as an alternative in such instances.

A student's mask or face covering is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members are responsible for providing their own face coverings. However, the district will supply disposable face covering for individuals who arrive at a building, or board school transportation without one.

If students are in violation of this policy, the building principal will consult with the parent/guardians to determine whether an exception is appropriate, or the student may be removed from the school building for in-person learning until such time as they can comply with the requirement or the requirement is lifted.

Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of School Committee policy.

Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/district facility.

This policy will remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee.

LEGAL REF.: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, COVID-19 Order No. 31 -
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/may-1-2020-masks-and-face-coverings/download>

REFS.: Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Considerations for Wearing Masks -
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – Reopening Guidelines - <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>
Commonwealth of Massachusetts – Mask Up MA! –
<https://www.mass.gov/news/mask-up-ma>

SOURCE: MASC – August 2020

*Approved by the
Abington School Committee
On September 10, 2020*