

District School Board of Pasco County
Emergency Rule – Face Coverings

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) and World Health Organization (“WHO”) recommend that everyone wear a face covering to help prevent community spread of COVID-19. Face coverings have also been mandated by Pasco County. Current medical research shows that COVID-19 is most commonly spread through respiratory droplets created when a person talks, sings, raises their voice, shouts, sneezes, or coughs, even when a person is asymptomatic. The face covering reduces and/or prevents the number of these droplets from making it into the environment and being inhaled by another person. When you wear a face covering, you help protect others around you from COVID-19, and when those around you wear face coverings, they are protecting you and others around them. While social distancing and regular hand washing are also essential, social distancing is not always possible. In those situations, face covering provides additional protection.

Therefore, the District has mandated that all employees, visitors, and students wear a mask or other face covering while on school property and/or engaged in school activities. For the purpose of this rule, face coverings will be interpreted broadly to include items like masks, face shields, scarfs, bandannas, and fishing buffs. Face coverings must be worn in accordance with established guidelines. Ineffective mesh face coverings or purposefully wearing face coverings incorrectly or punching holes in them are prohibited. Face coverings and personal protective equipment may not be worn in a manner that conceals the wearer’s entire face (ski masks, gas masks, costume masks, etc.) and must otherwise comply with the applicable standards of dress as set forth in the Student Code of Conduct. Please review this important information regarding safe use of face coverings.

Please remember that even with use of face coverings, proper social distancing should always be observed to the maximum extent possible. Students, staff, and visitors must remain six (6) feet away from non-household members whenever possible. In addition, all individuals should wash their hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, which has been placed throughout the school buildings.

When to Wear/Remove a Face Covering

- Remember, COVID-19 is primarily transmitted through speaking, coughing, or sneezing.
- The face covering must cover your nose and mouth completely.
- A face covering is required on all school buses, in all District buildings, in all school buildings and during all school-sponsored events and activities. This requirement is applicable to all employees, parents, and visitors entering the buildings and/or attending a school event and all students. Athletes will be encouraged, but not required to wear face coverings during practice and play.
- Everyone is responsible for supplying their own face coverings. School buildings will be stocked with a limited number of disposable face masks for emergency situations only.
- The face covering should be put on upon arrival at any school or District building before exiting your vehicle in the parking lot. Face coverings must be worn on the bus.

- The face covering must remain in place while inside all buildings, including as you walk into the school or district building, when working in or walking through common areas such as hallways, stairways, and elevators, and whenever you are in any room, including classrooms, or enclosed area where people are present.
- Face covering may be removed outdoors where social distances of 6 feet is possible, when in a room alone with the door closed, and at the end of the day after exiting the building. Those students taking a bus must keep the mask in place until they have exited the bus.
- Since eating and drinking with a face covering in place is not possible, it can be removed during meal or snack times. Social distancing of at least 6 feet is still recommended during these times when cohorts cannot be maintained.
- Schools will create “mask break” opportunities for students where appropriate.

Proper Care of Your Face Covering

If using a disposable face covering, it should be discarded after each use.

Cloth face coverings should be washed after each use, at least once per day. Use detergent and hot water. Dry the face covering completely on your dryer’s highest heat setting. If you do not have a dryer, dry the face covering in direct sunlight if possible. If you must reuse your face covering before you wash it, wash your hands after you put it back on and do not touch your face. Throw away cloth face coverings that:

- No longer cover your nose and mouth
- Are stretched out or do not stay on your face
- Have damaged ties or straps
- Have holes or tears in the fabric

Accommodations

There are certain medical conditions for which wearing a face covering is contraindicated. All requests for reasonable accommodation from the requirement to wear a face mask will be considered in accordance with the District’s policies and procedures as well as all applicable laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 12101, *et seq.*, § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 794, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400, *et seq.* and/or any other applicable federal, state or local law.

- Employees who have an underlying medical condition that impacts their ability to wear a face covering should contact his/her worksite supervisor or the Office of Employee Relations to request an accommodation. Medical documentation will be required for a reasonable accommodation that would exempt an employee from wearing a face covering to be granted.
- Students with a medical condition that impacts their ability to wear a mask should address the request with his/her individual school. A doctor’s note will be required.

Rule Modification Due to Prevailing Conditions

This rule provides authority to the Superintendent to modify the provisions of this emergency rule to align with the prevailing conditions and local circumstances relative to COVID-19.