

DRAFT: COVID-19 Temporary Policy

FACE MASKS

The Lincoln School District is 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. 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 mask should cover the nose and mouth, fit snugly but comfortably against the face, and secure under the chin with ties or ear loops. Based on guidance from health authorities neck gaiters, open-chin, triangle bandanas, and face coverings containing valves, mesh material, or holes of any kind will not be considered appropriate. Masks must have at least 2 layers of breathable material. The masks must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, on school grounds and on school transportation.

The CDC strongly encourages the use of masks to reduce the spread of COVID-19, and recognizes there are specific instances when wearing a mask may not be feasible. Appropriate and necessary accommodations will be made for students/faculty/staff who are unable to wear masks due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other identified health or safety concerns. If your child is unable to wear a mask at school please provide the school nurse with written documentation from your child's pediatrician. Depending on the situation, a remote learning environment or modified scheduled and/or learning environment may be advised for your child. Additional accommodations will be considered when participating in formal Special Education Evaluation. If no accommodations are warranted, every individual must wear a mask in school buildings, on school grounds, and on school transportation.

Additionally, face masks will not be required when appropriate **social/physical distancing of 6 feet or more** can be maintained and is enforced:

- During designated mask breaks for faculty, staff and students
- While eating or drinking as directed and in a designated space
- **For the purpose of providing welcome and instructional videos and other video conferencing to students and parents. These pre-taped or live/virtual videos may only be done when the faculty member or administrator is alone in a classroom/office and only when it has been assured that other staff members or students will not be coming into the space prior to cleaning (with the exception of the custodial staff who will be notified of this activity before entering the space).**

Although not required by DESE, the district is requiring students in preschool through grade 1 to wear masks. Direct teaching and ongoing support will be provided to students. The expectation is that children in the younger grades wear masks to the extent possible in combination with other mitigating measures.

A student's mask is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members are responsible for providing their own masks. However, the district will supply disposable masks 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 and transferred to remote 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 must wear masks at all times when on school grounds. Construction workers or other maintenance workers hired by the district may only take their masks off outdoors and when they are able to maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance. In addition, when working in the buildings, masks must be worn and at least 6 feet of distance maintained.

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

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

LEGAL REFERENCE:

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

REFERENCES:

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

