



MSBSD Face Mask Guidelines

Updated: August 10, 2020

Mat-Su Borough School District facilities will require face masks be worn. Public health experts, both locally and nationally, emphasize the importance of mask use as a component of mitigating the spread of COVID-19. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), masks are a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the mask coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. This is called source control. COVID-19 can spread by people who do not have symptoms and do not know that they are infected. That's why it's important for everyone to wear masks in public settings and practice social distancing (staying at least 6 feet away from other people).[LF1]

Based upon this guidance, Mat-Su Borough School District has adopted the following mask requirement. All students in grades 3-12 and all employees will be required to wear face masks at all times in public areas and shared workspaces with limited exceptions. All visitors, volunteers and facility use participants will also be required to wear face masks in accordance with these guidelines. Students in grades PK-2 will be encouraged to wear masks. Consistent mask use provides us the best opportunity to keep in-person[JA2] learning available to students and families. Staff are expected to model proper mask use throughout the school day. Details and exemptions are outlined below.

Face masks – refers to a cloth or paper face covering that will cover the wearer's nose and mouth. Respirators/masks with an exhalation valve are not considered acceptable alternatives in compliance with this requirement. Face shields with a cloth or paper surround which covers the wearer's[JA3] chin and sides of the face are acceptable alternatives in compliance with this requirement.

All students and staff will receive a cloth mask at the beginning of the school year. Individuals will not be required to wear the District issued mask and can use a mask of their choosing as long as the mask covers the wearer's nose and mouth, secures under the chin, fits snugly against the sides of the face and is free from words or insignia which are prohibited as outlined in the [District's Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#).

Information regarding how to safely wear, remove and clean cloth masks is available on the [attached flyer](#). The more time students and staff spend in a mask the more effective this mitigation strategy will be at keeping schools open for in-person learning. In addition[JA4] , to the attached the CDC recommends the following regarding masks at school.

- Individuals should refrain from touching their mask while wearing them and, if they do, they should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Staff should wash or sanitize hands before and after helping a student put on a mask.
- Masks should not be worn if they are wet.
- Masks should never be shared or swapped.
- Masks should be clearly identified with the wearer's names or initials to avoid confusion or swapping.

Mask Breaks for Students:

- Mask usage for every second of the day is not a reasonable standard.
- Any student who expresses that they are having trouble breathing should be provided a location where they can be socially distanced to take a mask break.
- Any student who requests a mask break should be provided a location where they can be socially distanced to take a mask break.
- All students will be offered multiple mask breaks throughout the day.
 - Mask breaks can only occur when proper social distancing can be maintained:
 - ❑ Such as when students are seated in a classroom with appropriate social distancing between all students and staff;
 - ❑ AND efforts should be made to schedule mask breaks during activities that are safer for mask breaks like during silent reading;
 - ❑ OR in an outside environment where social distancing can be maintained like on a class walk, or recess.
 - Additional mask breaks can be incorporated into the day based upon teacher discretion provided that social distancing requirements and activity standards are maintained throughout the break.

Mask wearing exemptions:

- When alone in an office, classroom or individual workspace.
- When outside and social distancing standards can be maintained.
- When engaged in high intensity physical activity.
- When eating or drinking.
- When experiencing trouble breathing or are unconscious.
- When incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.
- Children younger than 2 years old.
- Individuals who are or are caring for someone who is deaf or hard of hearing and rely on lipreading to communicate.
- Individuals with special educational or healthcare needs, including intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, and sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

Students who are unable to wear a mask because of an underlying health condition or other medical reason should submit medical documentation to the school nurse for review. Employees who are unable to wear a mask because of a health condition or other medical reason must contact their

supervisor. Employees will be asked to request an accommodation by completing the ADA Medical Inquiry Form and the ADA Request for Accommodations form which can be found [here](#).

Face shields may be an approved substitute for face masks in some situations but are not a substitute generally. The CDC does not recommend the use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings. If face shields are approved for use without a mask, they should wrap around the sides of the wearer's face and extend below the chin.

Student Mask Non-Compliance:

- Students who forget their mask will be provided with a mask for the day.
- Students who refuse to wear their mask in school, or students whose parents will not allow them to wear a mask based upon their family' preference will be contacted by school administration to arrange for At -Home learning.

Examples of acceptable face masks:



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