

1.62.1 MASKS

The District recognizes the health and safety benefits of facial coverage during virus outbreaks. Viruses like COVID-19 are transmitted through respiratory particles produced by an infected person who coughs, sneezes, or talks. These particles can land on commonly touched surfaces or be inhaled through the nose or mouth and into the lungs, which causes infection. Masks help prevent people with a contagious virus from spreading the virus. Proper facial coverage protects healthy individuals from virus exposure and decreases virus-spread rates.

Definitions

The terms “mask” and “facial coverage” mean a cloth face covering or non-surgical medical masks, not a surgical mask or respirator (like an N95 respirator). Respirators are personal protective equipment that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) recommends be reserved for health care providers. Cloth face coverings are not personal protective equipment because they are not designed to protect the wearer; cloth face coverings are designed to shield infected individuals and thus protect others against virus spread.

A “face shield” is a transparent hard plastic face covering that is attached to a helmet, hat, or headband that covers the wearer’s eyes, nose, and mouth. Using a face shield is considered a different form of masking and may be appropriate in limited circumstances for some individuals who cannot wear a cloth face covering due to certain medical conditions or whose job responsibilities dictate the use of a face shield rather than a mask.

The term “new” means unused and uncontaminated.

The term “wear” means to put the mask over the nose and mouth. The mask should fit against the sides of the face.

Policy

The Board will consider available information and advise the Superintendent or designee to provide notice to the school community about mask requirements.

Employees, students, and visitors are expected to provide their own masks for personal use. No individual is permitted to “share” a face mask with another individual on school premises or during school activities.

Exceptions

General Exceptions: Students, employees, and visitors may opt out of a mask requirement for medical, religious, or personal reasons.

The parent/guardian of any student seeking an exception to this policy should complete the *Opt-Out Form* found on the JPS website or in the office at each school.

Employees seeking an exception to this policy should complete the *Opt-Out Form* located on the Human Resources page of the JPS website or from the Human Resources office and provide any required documentation. The form must be delivered or sent via email to the employee's supervisor.

Employees who wish to use a face shield rather than a mask must receive approval from the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee. In no circumstances will a face shield that does not extend below the chin of the individual be an acceptable masking substitute.

Temporary Exceptions: Individuals may temporarily remove masks when engaging in the activities listed below. These activities should be conducted in a manner that maintains appropriate social distance. When a mask is temporarily removed, it should be promptly returned to the face upon the cessation of the activity for which removal was permitted.

- A. A school approved activity in which the location and/or nature of the activity makes it highly impractical and even unsafe to wear a mask (e.g., sports activities);
- B. physical exercise programs;
- C. consumption of food, beverages, and medication; and
- D. other activities as approved by District administration.

District coaches and sponsors shall assist District administrators in determining to what extent masks should be required during school-sponsored activities, given the availability of social distance and practicality of mask-wearing while participating in the activity.

Additionally, in rare situations, the Superintendent or designee may grant an employee a general or temporary exception from wearing a mask when mandated or may grant an appropriate workplace accommodation if wearing a mask substantially impedes the employee from performing a basic function of the employee's job or the mask creates a workplace hazard. For example, an exception may be warranted if during the course of an employee's job duties there is a substantial likelihood that a facial mask would catch on fire, catch in machinery, or prevent the employee from seeing or smelling a workplace hazard. An employee who believes their position qualifies for this exception should submit a written request detailing the circumstances warranting the exemption to their building principal or supervisor to present to the Superintendent or designee.

Consequences

Non-compliance with the District's designated masking procedure may result in disciplinary action or provision of an alternative-education environment.

Employees may receive disciplinary action up to and including possible termination. Students may receive disciplinary action consistent with the District's discipline code; however, students will not receive out-of-school suspension unless a student and the student's parent or guardian refuse other reasonable options extended by the District.

Students' access to education outweighs disciplinary measures for non-compliance with masking procedures as long as students and parents or legal guardians work cooperatively with District officials to determine an alternative to masking. If a student refuses to wear a mask, the District

will contact the student's parent or guardian. If the student's parent or guardian supports the student's refusal and the refusal is not based on medical, religious, or personal reasons, the student will be subject to the District's disciplinary procedures applicable to students.

Even when masks are required, a student must promptly and fully respond to a request by a teacher or school administrator to remove the mask or other facial covering. Any such request will be made only when deemed necessary by the school representative for ensuring compliance with District rules of conduct or for health-or-safety-related reasons.

If the District elects to modify its masking procedure to afford more protection, the school must provide individuals with reasonable notice. Individuals will not be disciplined for failure to modify mask usage until given notice of the policy modification and reasonable time to adapt.

Impact on Existing District Policies and Rules

Regardless of which masking procedures the District employs, no individual may wear a mask with a design on it which violates the District's dress code or would substantially disrupt or materially interfere with the educational environment of the school.

Approved by the Board of Education August 2020
Proposed Revision September 2021