

FACE COVERINGS

The Canton Public School District is committed to providing a safe environment in schools during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Maintaining a safe environment is critical to the District's ability to ensure students remain in a full-time classroom learning environment, PreK-12 and the Post-Graduation Program.

Therefore, in accordance with guidance and recommendations from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following recommendations and requirements are in place beginning on February 28, 2022 until further notice.

- **Individuals who are vaccinated are not required to wear a mask, but may do so if desired, except in certain instances as noted in the guidance below.**
- **Individuals who remain unvaccinated or are otherwise immunocompromised are not required to wear a mask but are strongly recommended to do so in school buildings and on school grounds, even when social distancing is observed.**
- **By DESE and DPH protocol, students and staff returning from 5-day quarantine following a positive COVID test must follow strict mask use, other than when eating, drinking, or outside, and conduct active monitoring for symptoms, through day 10 of exposure.**
- **By state public health order, masks will be required in all school health offices.**
- **All members of the Canton school community will contribute to a culture of respect, tolerance and inclusivity for those who choose to or must wear a mask, as well as to those individuals who cannot wear a mask, or choose to not wear a mask in instances where mask wearing is strongly recommended.**

In the instances where masks are required above, CPS will require all students and all staff to wear masks and or face coverings with 2 or 3 layers that adequately cover both their nose and mouth, and are well-fitted to the individuals. Preschool students are strongly encouraged to wear masks. Some masks and/or face coverings are not appropriate for the school setting and include bandanas, gaiters (neck scarfs), masks with vents, and masks with inappropriate language in violation of the District dress code.

For more information about appropriate mask use, please see:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/cloth-face-covering.pdf>

In the instances where masks are required above, Per CDC guidance, individuals may be excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons. Specifically, if the individual:

- has trouble breathing.
- is unconscious.
- is incapacitated.
- cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance.

Exceptions to this policy under certain circumstances, such as for students with medical, behavioral or other challenges who are unable to wear masks, must be approved by the building principal in consultation with the school nurse or local Board of Health. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative in some instances.

A student's mask or face covering is to be provided by the student's family. Surgical masks rather than cloth masks are strongly recommended. 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 revisited by the School Committee in conjunction with DESE and DPH and Board of Health recommendations.

Guidance Statements: Massachusetts Department of Public Health

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-mask-requirementsmask-requirements-in-certain-locations-https://search.mass.gov/?q=school+health+offices>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools
Updated January 13, 2022.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – Fall 2021 Covid-19
Guidance Updated February 9, 2022

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2022-0209mask-requirement-update.pdf>

SOURCE: CPS Policy– February 17, 2022

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