

FACE COVERINGS

The Milton Public Schools 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 or face coverings. 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 covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, on school grounds and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed unless otherwise directed by this policy.

Face masks must:

- cover both the nose and mouth
- fit snugly but comfortably against the sides of the face
- be secured with ear loops or ties (or elastic in the case of gaiters)
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be either disposable or able to be laundered and dried without damage or change to shape

The following face coverings are encouraged in Milton Public Schools:

- Surgical masks
- 2- and 3-layer cloth masks
- Face shields are permitted, but only in addition to a mask

The following face covering are not permitted in Milton Public Schools:

- 1 layer cloth masks
- 1 layer neck gaiters
- vented masks (masks with exhalation valves)

Individuals may be excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons, per CDC guidance:
The individual:

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

In addition, masks or face coverings will not be required for anyone who has a medical, behavioral or other challenge making it unsafe to wear a face mask or face covering. Requested exemptions will be granted on a case by case basis after receipt of Milton Public School's Face Mask Medical Exemption Form completed by a physician. Parents/ Guardians may not excuse their child from the face mask requirement by signing a waiver.

Face masks must be worn by bus drivers as long as they do not interfere with the health and safety of the driver.

Additionally, face masks or face coverings will not be required when appropriate social distancing is enforced:

- during mask breaks;
- while eating or drinking;

A student's mask or face covering can be provided by the student's family. Staff members can be responsible for providing their own face coverings. However, the district will supply disposable face covering for individuals who are without one.

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, school physician and/or the local Board of Health. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative in some instances.

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 placed in 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.

For mask use during school sponsored athletics shall be governed by MIAA/DESE guidelines and additional policies as necessary.

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

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

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

REFS.: 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

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