

Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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FACE COVERINGS

POLICY

The Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities is committed to providing students, staff, and visitors with a safe and healthy environment, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to maintain a healthy environment, the Board will follow the mandates and requirements set forth by the Ohio Governor, Ohio Department of Health, Stark County Health Department, Ohio Department of Education and other entities (“Directing Entities”) in regards to the wearing of face coverings/masks as it relates to protecting the health of students, employees, and visitors.

Face coverings/masks should:

- Be placed on and removed in accordance with guidelines which promote the health and safety of individuals.
- At a minimum, face coverings/masks should be cloth/fabric and cover an individual’s nose, mouth, and chin.
- Fit snugly, but comfortably to allow for breathing without restrictions
- Consist of two or more layers of cloth, if it is a cloth face covering

There are specific exemptions regarding the use of face coverings/masks for people served, employees, and visitors. Exemptions are addressed on a case by case basis in accordance to local, state, and federal guidance and mandates.

Historical Resolution Information		Reviewer(s): Director of Early Intervention and Nursing Services
Date	Resolution Number	
9/22/20 12/12/23	09-40-20 12-48-23	

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PROCEDURE

- A. Proper use of a face covering/mask is essential and effective and safe use includes:
1. Cleaning your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer if water is not available before putting on your face covering/mask.
 2. Ensure your mask does not have any holes or tears.
 3. Determine the top and the front of the face covering/mask.
 4. Proper technique for applying your mask depends on the type of mask you are wearing (donning):
 - a. *Face Mask with Ear loops*: Hold the mask by the ear loops. Place a loop around each ear.
 - b. *Face Mask with Ties*: Bring the mask to your nose level and place the ties over the crown of your head and secure with a bow.
 - c. *Face Mask with Bands*: Hold the mask in your hand with the nosepiece or top of the mask at fingertips, allowing the headbands to hang freely below hands. Bring the mask to your nose level and pull the top strap over your head so that it rests over the crown of your head. Pull the bottom strap over your head so that it rests at the nape of your neck.
 - d. Mold or pinch the stiff edge to the shape of your nose.
 - e. Pull the bottom of your mask over your mouth and chin.
 5. **Face covering/mask must cover your nose, mouth, and chin.**
 6. Prior to removing your mask, clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer, if water is not available, before taking off your face covering/mask.
 7. The front of the face covering/mask is contaminated. Avoid touching the front of the face covering/mask.
 8. Only touch the ear loops/ties/bands.
 9. Proper technique for removing your mask depends on the type of mask you are taking off (doffing):
 - a. *Face Mask with Ear loops*: Hold both ear loops and gently lift and remove the mask.
 - b. *Face Mask with Ties*: Untie the bottom bow first then untie the top bow and pull the mask away from you as the ties loosen.
 - c. *Face Mask with Bands*: Lift the bottom strap over your head first then pull the top strap over your head.
 - d. If the face covering/mask is disposable, throw it out after removing it.
 - e. Cloth face covering/mask should be placed in a plastic bag and should be washed after each use or daily after use.
 - f. Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer if water is not available after you have disposed of your face covering/mask.

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- B. All employees of the Board are required to wear face coverings/masks as mandated by directing entities.
1. Employees must wear a face covering/mask upon entering all Board buildings. (administrative, schools, and transportation)
 2. Face coverings/masks are to be worn in all areas of the building including while transitioning through entryways, hallways, in restrooms, office suites and common areas.
 3. A Board employee is exempt from wearing a face covering/mask for one of the following reasons:
 - a. Face coverings in the work setting are prohibited by law or regulation;¹
 - b. Face coverings are in violation of documented industry standards;¹
 - c. Face coverings are not advisable for health reasons;¹
 - d. Face coverings are in violation of the business's documented safety policies;¹
 - e. Face coverings are not required when the employee works alone in an assigned work area;¹ or
 - i. Face coverings/masks are required to be worn by an employee who has returned to work after returning from out of the State of Ohio for a period of 14 days, regardless of where they work in an agency building.
 - f. There is a functional (practical) reason for an employee not to wear a facial covering in the workplace.¹
 4. The Board must provide written justification, upon request, explaining why an employee is not required to wear a facial covering in the workplace.^{1,2}
- C. All Visitors to a Board location are required to wear a face covering/mask upon entering the Board location.
1. If a visitor does not have a face covering/mask, one will be provided to them.
 2. A visitor is exempt from wearing a face covering/mask for one of the following reasons:
 - a. Facial coverings are not advisable for health reasons.¹
 - b. The visitor is unable to remove the face covering without assistance. ¹
 - c. The visitor is a child younger than 2 years old. ⁴
 - d. The visitor is unable to tolerate the face covering due to documented health reasons.
 3. In the event the visitor is unable to wear a face covering/mask, all reasonable accommodations will be made to assist the visitor while maintaining the guidelines as set forth by the Ohio Department of Health and the local Health Department or other directing entities.
 - a. Allowing the visitor to use a conference room where social distancing can be maintained
 - b. Use available barriers to prevent exposure of others in the presence of the visitor such as Plexiglas barriers or face shields
 - c. Sanitizing of room per current established procedures

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- D. Students are required to wear face coverings/masks while riding on Board transportation and in school.
1. It is the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that all students wear face coverings/masks when in school, specifically students in grades K-12. ⁴
 2. Students in preschool are encouraged to wear a mask at their parent's discretion following recommended safety procedures and guidelines.
 3. A student is exempt from wearing a face covering/mask for one of the following reasons:
 - a. The student is unable to remove the face covering/mask without assistance. ^{1,4}
 - i. Special attention needs to be given to a change in a student's physical condition which may impact their ability to remove a face covering/mask such as splints being applied per an approved Behavioral Support Plan.
 - b. A child with a significant behavioral/psychological issue undergoing treatment that is exacerbated specifically by the use of a facial covering (e.g. severe anxiety or tactile aversion)⁴
 - c. A child living with severe autism or with extreme developmental delay who may become agitated or anxious wearing a mask.⁴
 - d. A child with a facial deformity that causes airway obstruction.⁴
 - e. The facial covering/mask is not advisable for health reasons. ¹
 - f. A student should not wear a face covering/mask if the only face covering available is a possible choking or strangulation hazard.
 - g. A student should not wear a face covering/mask if they have difficulty breathing with a face covering on or they are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face covering/mask without assistance.
 - h. A student should not wear a mask while eating, drinking or during outdoor recess, outdoor physical education or indoor physical education if able to maintain physical distance of 6 feet or more.
 - i. Beyond the categories D(3)(a)(b)(c)(d), there are no diagnoses that warrant blanket exemptions from wearing a face covering/mask. Specifically, asthma, allergies, and sinus infections are not a contraindication for using a face covering/mask.⁴
- E. The Board recognizes face coverings may not be possible in every situation or for some people. Adaptations and alternatives should be considered whenever possible to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading.
1. Face shields
 - a. A face shield that wraps around the face and extends below the chin can be considered as an alternative where cloth face coverings would hinder the learning process.³

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- b. A face shield is an option when close contact with other people is expected. The face shield is worn in addition to the face covering/mask.
- c. A face shield may also be an alternative if an employee meets certain medical criteria that excludes them from wearing a face covering.³
- d. Wearing a face shield in addition to a mask can be considered but is not a substitute for a cloth face covering if the person does not meet the exemption criteria for wearing a facial covering/mask.
- e. Reusable face shields will be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

References:

¹ Ohio Department of Health “Director’s Second Order to Extend the Expiration of Various Orders” – 7.6.2020

²Ohio Department of Health – Responsible Restart Ohio General Office Environments – 5/26/2020

³ Ohio Department of Health – Health and Safety Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools 2020

⁴ Joint Letter from AAP and CDC support for students wearing masks in hospital, school and communities. August 4, 2020

https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/OHOOD/2020/08/04/file_attachments/1511083/8.3.20%20OCHA%20and%20AAP%20Face%20Coverings%20Masking%20Guidelines_.pdf