

Gardner Public Schools

Face Mask/Face Covering Protocol for Staff, Students & Visitors

In accordance with policy EBCFA, Face Coverings, Gardner Public School staff, students, and visitors, are required to wear a face mask or a cloth face covering in school buildings, on school grounds, and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed. Staff and students are required to wear their own mask into school each day. The mask/face covering should be washed daily, at home, by hand or washing machine, and dried. It must cover the mouth and nose and fit securely not allowing gaps or spaces around the outside edges.

Masks with vents/exhalation valves, gaitor, and bandana style masks are not allowed as per CDC guidance. Face shields alone without a mask are not acceptable, but may be used by staff or students that have documented conditions inhibiting them from wearing a mask or along with a mask. The district has purchased “replacement masks”, which will be available for those needing a new one during the school day. Should the mask become visibly soiled on the outside or not fit correctly, a replacement mask should be worn.

Individuals may be excused from wearing a face mask/face covering for the following reasons, per CDC guidance:

The individual:

- cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance
- has difficulty breathing
- has a documented medical or behavioral health condition that inhibits them from wearing a mask or face covering. Alternative Personal Protective Equipment should be considered for these individuals, if possible, such as a face shield. Gardner Public Schools may require documentation of conditions to exclude a staff or student from this requirement.

When appropriate social distancing is enforced, masks may be removed at the following times:

- ***during mask breaks*** - 6 feet physical distancing required
- ***while eating and drinking*** - 6 feet physical distancing required
- ***during outside physical education classes*** -10 feet physical distancing required- due to the potential of heavier breathing and louder speaking with increase activity
- ***while outside***-6 feet of physical distancing required

Designated mask breaks must occur throughout the day. When possible, mask breaks should be outside with all individuals being 6 feet apart or more and as stated above. Mask breaks can

occur in the building/classroom as long as the individual taking the mask break is at least 6 feet apart and windows are open. Mask breaks should be kept to a maximum of 5 minutes unless eating. Any student that states that they are in need of a mask break should be allowed to have one following the steps below. If an individual is requiring many mask breaks or mask breaks beyond 5 minutes at a time, please consult with the school nurse.

All school staff and students will follow these steps for hand hygiene and removing a mask prior to eating, drinking, or mask breaks:

1. **Wash hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and in accordance with the handwashing protocol or sanitize hands using Alcohol Based Hand Sanitizer. Handwashing with soap and water is preferable to alcohol based hand sanitizer prior to eating or handling food.
2. **Sit at an assigned seat or assigned space**, 6 feet from others, with a clean paper towel on the edge of the desk/table.
3. **Remove the face mask** by touching ear loops only and avoid touching the outside or inside of the mask
4. **Place the mask on a clean paper towel** with the outside of the mask down.
5. **While touching ear loops only, fold in half** so the inside of the mask is inside the fold.
6. **Eat, drink or have mask break**
7. **Unfold mask** touching ear loops only
8. **Place mask onto face**, touching ear loops only
9. **Wash hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and in accordance with the handwashing protocol. Handwashing with soap and water is preferable to alcohol-based hand sanitizer after eating.

If students are in violation of this protocol, 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 in-person learning until such a time as they can comply with the requirement or until the requirement is lifted.

Violations of this protocol by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations to district protocols.

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