



## Face Coverings and Face Shield Guidance

As we begin the 2020-2021, a variety of safety measures – including wearing face coverings, practicing physical distancing, improving hygiene, and cleaning protocols – will improve the health and safety of our schools and community. **By offering face coverings for those who can wear them and face shields for those who need them, we limit the spread of COVID-19.**

Guidance regarding masks, face coverings, and face shields is evolving quickly. The recommendations and requirements outlined in this document reflect the best information available at the time of its publication (8/4/20). As new policies and science around the spread of COVID-19 comes to light and regulating agencies such as WHO, CDC, state and local health departments, and medical organizations is released, these recommendations may change.

### MANDATE

**All Washoe County School District employees and students (Pre-K and older) are required to wear face coverings.**

**Those who are not able to wear face coverings safely due to a documented medical vulnerability should wear a face shield, if safe to do so.**

**Employees and students in certain special education programs, where a student's ability to learn is significantly impacted by the ability to see the mouth of the speaker, clear face coverings should be worn in place of traditional face coverings when possible.**

**Face shields may be worn in addition to face coverings.**

### BACKGROUND

**Face coverings, masks, and shields provide different types of protection.** A **face mask** can be anything that covers the nose and mouth, but generally refers to a disposable, multilayer pleated or domed covering that fits to the face, such as a pleated surgical or procedure mask. A **face covering** is more loosely defined as it can be any fabric covering that covers the nose and mouth, from a homemade fabric mask to a bandana. **Clear face coverings** are reusable or disposable face coverings that cover the

mouth and nose and have a small plastic window in front of the mouth to allow others to see the mouth of the person wearing the covering. **Face shields** are clear physical barriers that cover the face, ideally from ear to ear and forehead to well below the chin. Due to increased air circulation around and under a face shield, shields do not replace face masks or face coverings. **Face shields are not replacements for face coverings.**

## **EXCEPTIONS**

Per Nevada Governor's Office, Declaration of Emergency Directive 024 (6/24/2020), Declaration of Emergency Directive 028 (7/28/2020), Nevada Medical Advisory Team: Guidance on Directive 024: Face Coverings (6/25/2020), and Nevada Department of Education Directive 028 – Frequently Asked Questions (7/29/2020), **the following employees and students are not required to wear face coverings, but should wear a face shield if safe to do so:**

- a. **Those with medical vulnerabilities that would be exacerbated by wearing a face covering, including those with medical and mental health conditions or disabilities that prevent them from safely wearing and removing a face covering. Anyone who wears a face covering must be able to remove it without assistance.**
  - i. Employees seeking an exemption should contact their Supervisor for information on next steps and be prepared to provide medical documentation to substantiate the request.
  - ii. Students seeking an exemption must provide the following documentation:
    1. Existing Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 documenting the medical vulnerability that would be exacerbated by wearing a face covering, OR
    2. Documentation from a medical professional (medical physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, advanced practice registered nurse, speech-language pathologist, psychiatrist, and psychologist) AND approval for the exemption from the school administrator.
    3. The documented exemption must be in place before the student attends in-person classes.

## **FACE COVERING BREAKS**

Employees and students may remove their face coverings when eating and drinking OR when engaged in strenuous exercise outdoors, as long as physical distance with other can be maintained (at least six (6) feet separation).

Although masks are to be worn at all times, as feasible, professional judgment must be used should a student need to temporarily remove their mask due to exhaustion. If this is required, based on the judgment of the supervising professional, the student should be more than six (6) feet from any other individual and the mask should be removed for only a brief time.

## FACE SHIELDS

**Any staff member or student may choose to wear a face shield while also wearing a face covering.**

Employees and students with a documented face covering exemptions should wear a face shield, if safe to do so.

## CONSEQUENCES/DISCIPLINE

When students have difficulty wearing a face covering, including playing with or removing the face covering, supportive teaching and guidance will be used to help the student wear the face covering properly and safely. If a student with an IEP has difficulty wearing a face mask, the IEP team may need to reconvene to address any necessary supports and accommodations. Should instruction not correct the behavior, or the student/family refuses to wear a mask at all, schools will utilize their progressive discipline plans and students may be placed on full distance learning if they refuse or choose not to wear their face covering. (Administrators, please refer to Student Behavior Administrative Manual.).

## PROVISIONS

- ▶ **Every employee and student will receive one reusable fabric face covering at the beginning of the school year.**
  - Every effort has been made to procure face coverings that wash and wear well, are adjustable to differently sized people, offer the ability to insert an adjustable nose bridge if desired, and prevent the wearer to blow out a candle 8 inches from the face.
  - One reusable fabric face covering is expected to last at least one (1) quarter.
  - It is the recipients' responsibility to clean the face covering daily and return to school with the face covering each school day.
  - Employees and students may wear personal face coverings (not issued by WCSD) if they wish.
- ▶ **For those in the following special education programs, WCSD will make every effort to provide one clear, reusable face covering:** teachers, aides, students, and classmates of those in the hearing-impaired and vision-impaired programs, as well as teachers and students in speech, Social Resource, Early Childhood, Comprehensive Life Skills, and Social Intervention programs.
- ▶ **Face shields will be supplied for staff and students with documented face covering exemptions, if they are able to safely wear the face shield.**
- ▶ **Face shields will be supplied for the following individuals who may choose to wear a shield in addition to a face covering:**
  - all teachers, teacher aides and assistants, and
  - special education bus drivers and transportation assistants.
- ▶ Those working in the school health office, including the school nurse, clinical procedure nurse, and clinical aide, will be wearing a combination of face shields and surgical masks or face coverings per Student Health Services direction.
- ▶ Disposable face coverings will be available for use:
  - In health offices,
  - As back-up on buses for those who do not have a face covering when boarding a bus, and
  - When a student or employee needs a temporary replacement if a face covering is lost, soiled, becomes wet, or is damaged.

- ▶ This document will be updated to reflect changing policies, guidance, and direction from governing and regulating entities.

## RESOURCES

WCSD Face Covering, Face Shield and Plexiglass FAQ

## REFERENCES

1. American Academy of Pediatrics, COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry  
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>
2. Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, COVID-19 and Asthma Toolkit for Schools  
<https://www.aafa.org/managing-asthma-and-covid19-in-school>
3. CDC: Cloth Face Covers  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
4. CDC: Schools & Child Care  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
5. Nevada Department of Education, Directive 028 – Frequently Asked Questions (7/28/2020)  
<https://www.washoeschools.net/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=35250&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=43716&PageID=15052>
6. Nevada Governor's Office, Declaration of Emergency Directive 024 (6/24/2020)  
<https://nvhealthresponse.nv.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Directive-024-Face-Coverings.pdf>
7. Nevada Governor's Office, Declaration of Emergency Directive 028 (7/28/2020)  
[http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ndedoenvgov/content/News\\_Media/Press\\_Releases/2020\\_Documents/2020-07-28DeclarationofEmergencyDirective028.pdf](http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ndedoenvgov/content/News_Media/Press_Releases/2020_Documents/2020-07-28DeclarationofEmergencyDirective028.pdf)
8. Nevada Governor's Office, Nevada Medical Advisory Team: Guidance on Directive 024: Face Coverings (6/25/2020) <https://nvhealthresponse.nv.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Guidance-on-Directive-24-Face-Coverings-UPDATED.pdf>
9. Nevada Governor's Office, Fact Sheet: What does the science say about face coverings? ([English](#)) ([Spanish](#))