



# Mask Protocol

City School District of New Rochelle

(As of 9/23/2020)

## Introduction

The proper wearing of masks in our schools is an important measure in stopping the spread of COVID-19. The CDC recommends masks “as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the mask coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice.” This limits people who are infected with COVID-19 but are not showing symptoms from passing on the virus to others.

## Definitions

Mask – A cloth, paper, or disposable face covering that fully covers the nose and mouth. It may or may not be medical grade. Masks that have an exhalation valve or vent are prohibited. This definition is subject to change if necessary in order to conform with future guidance issued by the CDC, NY State Department of Health and the City School District of New Rochelle.

Face shield – a clear, plastic shield that covers the forehead, extends below the chin and wraps around the sides of the face, protecting the eyes, nose and mouth from contamination from respiratory droplets, may be used along with masks or respirators. Face shields used alone, without a mask, are prohibited.

## Protocol

Face masks are required for students, staff and visitors while in schools, on school grounds – including playgrounds – and on buses, with certain exceptions for “mask breaks,” eating meals, and for individuals who are medically unable to wear them.

Whenever masks are off, NYSDOH guidance regarding social distancing will be enforced. Everyone will remain at least 6 feet apart, as per CDC guidelines except when the needs of the student require a distance of less than six feet or when a lesser distance is necessary to deliver instruction; in these instances, staff are required to wear their mask or other assigned PPE.

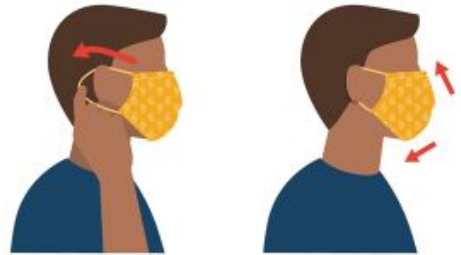
## Acceptable Masks

Acceptable face coverings for COVID-19 must fully cover the nose and mouth and wrap around the chin. Examples include cloth-based coverings (2-3 layers preferred) and

surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose. Masks that have exhalation valves or vents, which allow virus particles to escape are **prohibited** as are bandanas and gaiters. Masks are considered articles of clothing and should adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#), which says clothing “should not be obscene or constitute ‘hate speech,’” or be otherwise inappropriate. (P.12.)

Employees are permitted to wear their own acceptable face covering if they choose.

*Masks shall be provided to students and staff, if needed, at no cost.*



Employees with healthcare provider documentation stating they are medically unable to tolerate face covering will not be required to wear a mask. As in all cases when an individual is not wearing a mask, social distancing of at least six feet must be observed. Students in special classes, unable to tolerate a mask and maintain social distancing will be with staff who are certified to wear an N95 respirator mask with face shield for protection.

### Proper Use of a Mask

- Wash hands before putting on a mask
- Place the mask over your mouth and nose and secure it under your chin.
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face.
- Make sure you can breathe easily.
- Do not wear masks with exhalation valves or vents as they permit virus particles to escape.
- Do not put your mask around your neck or up around your forehead.
- Do not touch the mask. If you do, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.



### Exemptions

Exemptions to the mask requirement shall be made on a case by case basis. A mask exemption shall be considered, upon request of our District COVID-19 Resource Person, for any student, staff member or visitor who:

- Is medically unable to tolerate a mask.
- Has a mental or physical impairment such that a mask requirement would substantially interfere with the person’s ability to deliver or receive instruction during the school day

- Has a Section 504 Plan or Individualized Education Program that recommends a mask exception.

Teachers may also require exemptions for types of instruction in which it is important for students to see the lips and mouth, such as phonics, English as a new language or other language instruction and lip-reading. In such cases, the teacher may/will wear a see-through mask, and a social distance of six feet will be maintained.

In some cases, partial exemptions may be granted for specific periods of the school day, or for specific locations or events. Partial exemptions may also be granted for students who experience difficulties with masks – i.e. students with anxiety – but who might be able to wear a mask for shorter periods of time, with only short breaks.

### **Additional Precautions**

For those who are granted a full or partial exemption from wearing a mask, additional precautions shall be implemented. These may include, but are not limited to, some or all of the precautions listed below:

- The student/staff member shall be provided a polycarbonate barrier.
- Parents might be asked to drive the student to school
- Staff members who interact with the exempt person may be provided medical-grade personal protective equipment.
- The building shall increase the number of times a classroom containing a student or staff member with a mask exemption is sanitized and cleaned throughout the day.
- The district shall provide extra cleaning materials to ensure high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs, stair rails, counters, dining hall tables and benches, program equipment, and other items are regularly cleaned and disinfected.
- When appropriate, the student may be provided instruction designed to promote mask tolerance.
- For individuals who have difficulty with wearing a cloth face covering, but it is not medically contraindicated to wear a face covering, behavior techniques and social skills stories can be used to assist in adapting to wearing a face covering.
- Students' desks shall be arranged to face the same direction (rather than facing participants) to reduce transmission caused by virus-containing droplets (e.g., from talking, coughing, sneezing).
- Students and staff members shall have their own personal hand sanitizer. If a student's motor skills do not allow him or her to use a hand sanitizer and aid is necessary, a teacher/assistant should help the student by using a classroom sanitizer with a pump to avoid direct contact with a student.

### **Transportation**

Students must wear masks while boarding buses serving our schools and for the duration of the ride. Students will sit one per bench, except that siblings may sit together. Students who are exempted from wearing masks will maintain a social distance of six feet and may require special accommodations.

### **Meals and Breaks**

Face coverings may be taken off while eating meals, but social distancing must remain in

effect.

Mask Breaks will be scheduled throughout the day for those students who may need a break but are able to wear a mask for short periods of time. Teaching assistants and aids can help schedule breaks and take smaller groups of students outside while maintaining social distancing

Staff members are encouraged to be creative and take students outside for mask breaks in small groups.

- The break should be taken outside or in an area with good airflow. If it is inside, windows should be open when possible.
- The teacher or teaching assistant will consider the best activities for the break time, such as silent reading or studying.

The teacher must review the protocol for a mask break before the break begins.

- During the break make sure to use appropriate social distancing. If the break is in the classroom, students must stay in their seats.
- No visitors can enter or exit the classroom during the break.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. A student who sneezes will be required to put on the mask and get up to throw away the tissue, and perform hand hygiene..
- After the break, wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds each time or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

### **Enforcement**

If a student with a disability removes or refuses to wear a mask, the CSE/Section 504 Team shall conduct a manifestation determination review to determine whether or not the student's refusal to wear a mask is a manifestation of the student's disability. The District will follow applicable procedures under Section 504 or the IDEA before changing the student's educational placement or requiring the student to continue his/her learning virtually.

Everyone is responsible for ensuring that staff, students and visitors are following the rules.

### **Communications**

- The District shall post age-appropriate signs with visual cues on [how to properly wear and remove cloth face coverings.pdf icon](#)
- The District shall post age-appropriate signs with visual cues depicting [how to cover coughs and sneezes.pdf icon](#)

By following these protocols, everyone in the District will be playing their part in helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Mask wearing is a simple and effective measure we can take to safeguard our children, families and community.