

## **Use of Face Coverings in Great Falls Public Schools' Buildings:**

Effective 7/6/2020, Great Falls Public Schools has set the following guidance in regards to the usage of face coverings.

It is requested that ALL staff, visitors and students wear a mask. As listed below, there will be specific instances where masks or cloth face coverings will be required.

All staff, visitors and students **must** wear a cloth face covering when they come into a school or district building and must wear that face covering whenever they are in common areas. Staff, visitors and students will wear the cloth face covering when they enter the building, they are in hallways, when in the presence of a known health-compromised student or staff member, and any shared areas where a physical distance of six-feet cannot be maintained (shared offices, meetings, classrooms with students, etc). Some classrooms may not have physical distancing of six feet available and we recognize the need for students to take breaks from wearing their masks. Any "mask breaks" will be taken during quiet times of students working independently. For health-compromised staff or students, the District will offer additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to the health-compromised individual during times in which students take a break from their face coverings. Masks and cloth face coverings must be school appropriate.

Students and staff will be provided accommodations for face mask and cloth coverings, on an individual basis. Such accommodations could include:

- Face shields
- Buffs
- Plexiglass dividers

In order to protect our medically fragile and immunocompromised students and staff members, visitors/volunteers/vendors will not be allowed access beyond the Main Office without a mask or cloth face covering.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

#### ***Who should wear a face covering?***

- The CDC, US Surgeon General, and City-County Health Department is currently recommending that children over the age of 2 and adults wear some sort of cloth face covering when out in public. (Note: children under the age of 2, anyone with difficulty breathing, or someone who is unable to remove the mask/covering themselves should NOT wear a cloth covering)
- Medical grade face masks are to be worn by healthcare professionals.

#### ***When are times that it is important to make sure I have my face covering on?***

- At this time it is required that you wear a mask as you travel through buildings, common areas (including the bathroom), and when meeting with other individuals-especially if it will be difficult to maintain 6 feet apart.
- When distributing any items such as school materials, food, or staff materials. (note: gloves are also advised for these procedures)

### ***Why are we being required to wear a face covering in the above scenarios?***

- The use of face coverings is another mitigating measure, like hand washing and social distancing, to help reduce transmission of COVID-19.
- Evidence is showing that some individuals who have the COVID-19 virus do not show symptoms, but can still spread the virus through their coughs and respiratory droplets. Others may be developing symptoms while in public and could be sharing the virus through these droplets. Wearing a mask helps reduce the chances of these droplets infecting others.
- Face masks also help remind us to not touch our face. If you have “germs” or the COVID-19 virus on your hands and then touch your eyes, nose, mouth the virus can enter your body and potentially make you sick.

### ***When can I take off my face covering?***

- If you are alone in a private office or classroom setting you may take your mask off.

### ***What if I have a medical condition that prevents me from wearing a mask?***

- If you have a medical condition that prevents you from wearing a mask, you should notify Human Resources or your supervisor privately.
  - Few medical conditions would preclude wearing a mask and would typically be related to a lung condition called COPD or emphysema.
  - If you are unable to tolerate a mask related to a medical condition, you should wear a face shield. While not as effective as a cloth face covering, this affords others some protection from the wearer.

### ***Do I have to provide my own face mask?***

- We would ask all employees to find a mask that suits them best in fit and taste. If you do not have the ability to acquire a mask, GFPS will provide you a mask and will have face coverings readily available for all staff, students and visitors. If you are currently unable to acquire your own face covering, please contact GFPS Lead Transportation & Safety Technician, Julie Shotnokoff @ [Julie\\_shotnokoff@gfps.k12.mt.us](mailto:Julie_shotnokoff@gfps.k12.mt.us)
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### ***Do I need to wear my mask outdoors?***

- In general, being outdoors with the increase of fresh air circulation, decreases but doesn't negate the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- Athletics & Other Outdoor Activities
  - It is acceptable for staff to remove their cloth face covering when outside AND when all other people are more than 6 feet away from them AND when others are actively engaged so as not to unexpectedly come within 6 feet of the staff member when their cloth face covering is removed.
- Recess Duty, Class Outdoors, etc.
  - In general, these activities require staff to be readily available to students, it may be unpredictable when a student may quickly come within 6 feet of the staff member or if the staff member may need to aid the student and not be able to stay 6 feet apart. Staff are encouraged to continuously wear their cloth face covering in these situations for these reasons.

## **PROPER STEPS IN USING A FACE MASK:**

1. Make sure your mask has been washed/laundered and is clean prior to wearing it.
2. Wash or sanitize your hands.
3. Put the face mask on. (It should fit securely around your ears, cover your nose and mouth).
4. While wearing the face mask try not to touch it. If the mask needs to be adjusted then wash or sanitize your hands before and after touching the mask.
5. When removing the mask, try not to touch your face with your hands or the outside of the mask.
6. If you are going to take your mask off for a short time period have a designated paper or zip top bag that is clean to place your mask in. If you need to fold the mask, please make sure that the outside of the mask does not touch the inside area that goes against your face. Do not put the mask in your pocket or purse.
7. Practice hand hygiene after removing your mask.
8. Wash your face mask after every day of use if possible. Hand wash or wash on the gentle cycle with hot, soapy water. Allow the mask to air dry or dry on gentle cycle in dryer.

Face Covering Information Sheet: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/cloth-face-coverings-information.pdf>

Workplace decision tool: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/workplace-decision-tool.html>

Decision Tree for Schools: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/Schools-Decision-Tree.pdf>

### References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, April 9). *Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19*. Retrieved April 10, 2020 from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Cleveland Clinic. (2020, April 7). *Unsure About Actually Wearing a Face Mask? Here's How (and Why) to Do It*. Retrieved April 10, 2020 from [https://health.clevelandclinic.org/unsure-about-actually-wearing-a-face-mask-heres-how-and-why-to-do-it/?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_campaign=cc+tweets](https://health.clevelandclinic.org/unsure-about-actually-wearing-a-face-mask-heres-how-and-why-to-do-it/?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=cc+tweets)

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