

## Why Do We Need Them?

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Cloth face coverings and masks are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected and may not have symptoms. Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment.

All individuals in school facilities and on school grounds must be prepared to wear a face covering if another person unexpectedly cannot socially distance. All students and staff members must wear cloth face coverings or masks:

- Whenever they are within 6 feet of someone;
- In hallways;
- In restrooms; and
- In other congregate settings, including buses
- Whenever possible

Schools will allow an employee to wear their own acceptable face covering. Individuals without a face covering will be provided one.

## Who Should Not Wear A Face Covering?

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Face coverings should not be placed on:

- Children younger than 2 years old;
- Students where such covering would impair their health or mental health, or where such covering would present a challenge, distraction, or obstruction to education services and instruction;
- Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious;
- Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.



## Supporting Students Who May Struggle with Wearing a Face Covering

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For a student with a significant disability that limits their tolerance for wearing a face covering, PPE and other support will be provided to staff based on NYSED/DOH guidance, knowledge of the child's needs, and consideration of additional documentation or information shared by the parent.

It is important that this expectation not lead to conflict between or among children and teaching staff. Children who refuse to wear a face covering, are crying, or are dysregulated may be experiencing mental distress. In these cases, teaching staff and families should use positive, nurturing strategies to prevent conflicts over face covering, and encourage the child to consistently use a face covering over time.

For children who need additional support acclimating to the face covering requirement, a positive behavior intervention plan will be developed that supports a child towards consistently wearing a face covering.

For prolonged refusal due to significant disabilities, please contact School Administration, Health Services and the Special Education Department.



# YONKERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## FACE COVERINGS GUIDANCE

*All students, employees and visitors entering Yonkers Public Schools and facilities MUST wear a mask/cloth face covering in compliance with New York State and Westchester County Departments of Health.*

## Mask Breaks

Face coverings may be challenging for students (especially younger students) to wear in all-day settings such as school.

Masks breaks will be scheduled during the day as long as social distancing parameters can be maintained. Ideally, they occur outside and in a well-ventilated area when able.

## Types of Masks

There are many different types of masks for use. Surgical masks are most common as are facial cloth coverings. Both are acceptable for use. In most instances a more advanced “medical” mask or N95 or KN95, is not recommended for daily use.

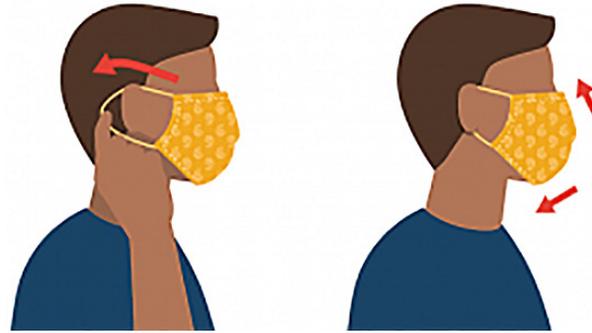
### Can Face Shield Be Used Instead of a Mask?

Currently the CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings because of a lack of evidence of their effectiveness.

However, wearing a mask may not be feasible in every situation for some people for example, people who are deaf or hard of hearing – or those who care for or interact with a person who is hearing impaired and other special situations.

### What about a mask with an exhalation valve or vent?

The CDC does not recommend use of masks or cloth masks for source control if they have an exhalation valve or vent because air flows more freely through the vent apparatus. This can result in expelled respiratory droplets that can reach others.



## How Do I Correctly Wear A Mask?

- Wash your hands before putting on your mask
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily

Individuals should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering or mask and to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer frequently.

- Don't put the mask around your neck or up on your forehead
- Don't touch the mask, and, if you do, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer to disinfect

## How Do I Correctly Take Off A Mask?

- Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
- Handle only by the ear loops or ties
- Fold outside corners together

## Adherence with Face Covering Requirements

All students, staff and visitors are expected to comply with face covering requirements. Refusal to wear an appropriate face covering will be subject to interventions in accordance with the *Yonkers Public Schools Code of Conduct* (Revised and Adopted October 16, 2019) (pp. 24-44).

## Medical Exemptions

**STAFF:** Employees with healthcare provider documentation stating they are not medically able to tolerate face covering cannot be required to do so. A letter from a healthcare provider must be submitted to Health Services for staff members.

**STUDENTS:** Parent must submit documentation from a doctor or other health care provider specifically documenting the medical condition and why the student's condition makes the student unable to wear or tolerate a face covering. A letter from a healthcare provider must be submitted to the school nurse for students.

Health Services will review the request and supporting documentation. Decisions on exemption will be based upon such documentation.

Questions can be directed to the school nurse or Health Services at:

healthservices@yonkerspublicschools.org  
or you can call: 914-376-8226.

Staff and Students will be permitted to attend school while requests are reviewed. Staff and Students with face covering exemptions must continue to adhere to all health and safety requirements, including hand hygiene and physical distancing requirements.