

## PROCEDURE 4316/5020/7340-P

ADOPTED: August 6, 2020

REVISED:

### **RULES REGARDING FACE MASK WEARING IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, emergency measures are required in response. In consideration of the recommendations issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and the requirements issued by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the superintendent is adopting this emergency procedure for all students, visitors, and employees.

#### **I. Students**

##### **A. Requirement to Wear Masks**

Until further notice, all kindergarten through 12th grade students shall be required to wear a face mask (a) while attending school or a school function in any school building, facility, or other area of a school campus, including outside, (b) when riding on school buses or other school transportation vehicles, and (c) when waiting at bus or other school transportation stops. All face masks must cover the nose and mouth of the student. Students shall wear masks and face coverings at all times except for the following:

1. The student is actively eating or drinking;
2. The student is engaged in strenuous physical activity and able to maintain 6 feet of distance from other people;
3. The student has difficulty breathing or otherwise cannot tolerate a face mask due to a developmental, medical, or behavioral health need as evidenced by documentation from a healthcare provider;
4. The student is unconscious; or
5. The student is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Documentation from a healthcare provider necessary to establish an exemption under Section (I)(A)(3) must specifically state that the student is not able to wear a mask and further opine that the healthcare provider has discussed the ramifications of not wearing a mask with the student's parent and that both believe that it will be safe for the student to attend school without wearing a mask.

##### **B. Consequences for Violating the Requirement**

Students who do not meet the requirements of section (I)(A)(3) of this procedure and who refuse to wear a face mask in all instances shall be referred for fully online instruction after a conference with the students' parents or guardians. Students who temporarily remove their masks (i.e. full removal from the face, uncovering their nose,

or uncovering their mouths) in violation of this policy shall receive consequences as follows:

1. For a first time offense, the student shall receive counseling on the importance of mask wearing.
2. For a second offense, the teacher or principal shall conduct a parent-teacher conference.
3. For a third offense, the student will receive a disciplinary consequence in accordance with the Code of Conduct and/or policy 4316.
4. For a fourth offense, the student will be referred for full time online instruction.

Principals have discretion to impose a higher level consequence for an earlier offense based on the severity of the incident and the age of the student.

## **II. Visitors**

Individuals holding safety sensitive positions are prohibited from engaging in conduct prohibited by Pitt County Board of Education Policy 7240, Procedure 7240-P, and from

### **A. Requirement to Wear Masks**

Until further notice, all visitors, except for children under the age of 2, shall be required to wear a face mask while present in any school building, facility, or other area of a school campus, including outside. All face masks must cover the nose and mouth of the visitor.

### **B. Consequences for Violating the Requirement**

Visitors who violate this requirement shall not be permitted to be on the premises of the school building, facility, or other area of a school campus, including outside.

## **III. Employees**

### **A. Requirement to Wear Masks**

Until further notice, all employees, including Pre-K staff, shall be required to wear a face mask while working or attending a school function in any school building, facility, or other area of a school campus, including outside, and when operating a school bus or other school transportation vehicles. All face masks must cover the nose and mouth of the employee.

Employees shall wear masks and face coverings at all times except for the following:

1. The employee is working in a classroom, office, or other enclosed space and no other person is present;
2. The employee is actively eating or drinking;

3. The employee is engaged in strenuous physical activity and able to maintain 6 feet of distance from other people;
4. The employee has a documented medical condition, has submitted a request for an exemption from this policy to the human resources department, and the human resources department has approved the request;
5. The employee is unconscious; or
6. The employee is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

**B. Consequences for Violating the Requirement**

Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

#### **IV. Contractors**

**A. Requirement to Wear Masks**

Until further notice, all contractors, including Pre-K contractors, shall be required to wear a face mask while working or attending a school function in any school building, facility, or other area of a school campus, including outside, and when operating a school bus or other school transportation vehicles. All face masks must cover the nose and mouth of the contractor.

Contractors shall wear masks and face coverings at all times except for the following:

1. The contractor is working in a classroom, office, or other enclosed space and no other person is present;
2. The contractor is actively eating or drinking;
3. The contractor is engaged in strenuous physical activity and able to maintain 6 feet of distance from other people;
4. The contractor is unconscious; or
5. The contractor is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

**B. Consequences for Violating the Requirement**

Contractors who violate this policy will be subject to termination of contracts/agreements, restricted from school property, and/or subject to other consequences as appropriate.

#### **V. Permitted Face Masks**

A face mask is any face covering that covers the nose and mouth which can be secured to the head with ties or straps or wrapped around the lower face. A face mask has a minimum of two or more layers. The state of North Carolina will supply students and staff with five reusable cloth face masks.

To meet the requirements of this policy, students and employees may wear the state supplied face masks, disposable masks, clear plastic masks, or cloth masks that are solid colored, spirit wear, or have a small repeating pattern. Visitors and contractors may wear disposable masks, clear plastic masks, or reusable cloth masks that are solid colored, spirit wear, or have a small repeating pattern. Masks should not have lewd or obscene images and should not display any insignias or words. Photographic examples of permitted face masks are depicted below.

The board will also permit students, visitors, employees, and contractors to wear solid colored “ear saver” straps which fit across the back of the head or headbands.

Tie/ Strap Mask Example



Gaiter Style Mask



Disposable Mask Example



Spirit Wear



## VI. Face Shields

Plastic face shields that wrap around the wearer’s face and extend below the chin may protect a wearer from respiratory droplets spread by others. Unlike with face coverings, it is not known if face shields provide any benefit in controlling the spread of respiratory droplets to others. The CDC does not currently recommend a face shield as a replacement for a face mask. However, employees and students who qualify for an exception under section (I)(A)(3) or III(A)(3) of this procedure may wear a plastic face shield as a substitute for a face mask.