



FACE COVERING REQUIREMENTS

COVID-19 GUIDANCE

Introduction

Face coverings are a critical step to help slow the spread of COVID-19 when combined with everyday preventive actions and social distancing in public settings.

We are required to follow NCDHHS guidance for schools. We also regularly check with the CDC and ABC Collaborative for recommendations and often provide references in our guidance.

Face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment. The [CDC recommends](#) the general public wear multi-layer face coverings.

A face covering must be secured safely over the nose, mouth, and under your chin.

Face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms.

Remember, your face covering may protect them. Their face covering may protect you.

Face Covering Requirements and Recommendations

Individuals are required to follow federal, state, and local requirements, if they are more restrictive than Casa Esperanza guidelines. These requirements and recommendations are subject to change at any time, depending on federal, state, and local health guidance and mandates.

Schools

As of May 20, 2021, North Carolina requires a face covering of your choice when indoors at a school; while traveling on buses, vendor transportation or other vehicles transporting students; or any other indoor location where children are present. This requirement applies to all staff, visitors, and K-12 students, even if they are fully vaccinated and even if they are 6 feet or more apart from other individuals.

On days when no students are in the school building, face coverings are optional. This applies to all staff, visitors, and K-12 students, even if they are fully vaccinated and even if they are 6 feet or more apart from other individuals. Employees who are not fully vaccinated are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering and maintain 6 feet of social distance.

If students are present on a teacher workday, like at year-round schools, then all employees are required to wear face coverings indoors. If the only students present on a teacher workday are the children of school employees, face coverings are optional indoors. All employees are required to wear face coverings anytime they are in the same area as children who do not live with them, even on teacher workdays or days when the majority of students are not present.

Pre-Kindergarten

Face coverings are required for all students 3 years or older.

Individuals who cannot tolerate a face covering due to developmental, medical, or behavioral health needs may request an accommodation by completing and submitting the appropriate form listed below. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the nature of the disability or medical need, the availability of alternative safety measures, and current public health guidance. All individuals are required to wear a face covering on WCPSS property while their request is under review.

Face Covering Accommodation Request Form For Employees
[Face Covering Accommodation Request Form For Students](#)

Individuals may briefly remove their face coverings in the following instances, while remaining socially distanced at least 6 feet from other individuals:

- While actively eating or drinking
- Are seeking to communicate with a hearing impaired person in a way that requires the mouth to be visible
- Are in a personal vehicle
- The face covering is impeding visibility to operate equipment or a vehicle

Face Coverings Optional Outdoors

Face coverings are optional, but not required outdoors. This includes recess, classes held outdoors, outdoor PE classes, outdoor eating, and similar small gatherings. Students, staff, visitors, and vendors may choose to wear a face covering outdoors in these situations if they want, but a school or staff member may not require it.

NCDHHS still recommends that anyone who is not vaccinated continue to wear a face covering when they are closer than six feet to another person, even when outdoors. NCDHHS strongly recommends that everyone (both vaccinated and unvaccinated) wear face coverings in

crowded, dense outdoor areas and in outdoor situations in which six feet of social distancing is difficult or not possible. Wearing face coverings in these outdoor situations are NCDHHS recommendations and are not required.

If You Do Not Have a Face Covering

When at the school, if you do not have access to a face covering, one will be given to you.

It is your responsibility to wash a reusable face covering when needed and bring it back to reuse it.

Cloth face coverings should be washed after each use. It is important to always remove face coverings correctly and wash your hands after handling or touching a used face covering. You can find information on how to wash a cloth face covering on the [CDC website](#).

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:

Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious.

Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.

Anyone who cannot tolerate a cloth face covering due to developmental, medical or behavioral health needs.

Any child under the age of 2

Face Coverings Breaks

Employees

Employees may remove their face coverings in the following situations, regardless of vaccination status:

Outdoors

Should maintain 6 feet of social distance from others while face coverings are removed, but it is not required while outdoors.

Indoors if they are alone in an enclosed room with the door shut.

Should remain more than 6 feet from the door, so if someone enters the room, they will still be socially distanced

Should post a sign on the door instructing individuals to knock and wait to be admitted into the room. This allows the employee time to put on their face covering before an individual enters the room.

Students

Employees may give students a face covering break when outdoors. Students should be encouraged to maintain six feet of social distance from others while face coverings are removed, but it is not required.

Consequences for Violation of Health Safety Protocols

The face-covering requirement and other health and safety protocols are critical tools in protecting against the spread of COVID-19. Student and employee noncompliance with these requirements and protocols will be taken seriously.

We will educate and support employees, students, and families on the importance of health safety guidance to support, encourage, and model the behaviors we expect of all individuals while on our property.

In instances where individuals inadvertently violate health safety guidance, staff will remind them of the proper protocol.

When support and non-disciplinary interventions are not enough to change student behavior that may risk the health safety of a school community, Board Policy authorizes disciplinary consequences, including in-school or out-of-school suspension, following the procedures contained in the Student Code of Conduct.

Serious, intentional or willful instances of employee noncompliance or repeated instances of noncompliance will be referred to Administration and will be addressed through more serious discipline actions up to, and including, dismissal.

Face Coverings Best Practices:

- Keep face covering over nose, mouth, and under your chin when wearing it
- Do not take it off to interact with someone or pull the face covering off your nose or mouth
- Do not touch the outside of the face covering with hands
- Do not touch or wear other people's face coverings
- Do not place a mask on a child younger than 2-years-old

Face coverings should:

- Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric
- Fit snugly against the sides of your face without gaps
- Be reasonably comfortable
- Allow you to breathe easily

Be secured safely over nose, mouth and under your chin and completely cover your nose and mouth

Be changed if it becomes soiled or wet

Cloth face coverings should be washed as needed

Wash face covering in washing machine using soap and water

Dry face covering in a dryer or allow to air dry

Face coverings should not:

Have exhalation valves or vents which allow virus particles to escape

Layering Face Coverings

You have the option of layering face coverings, but it is not required.

The [CDC](#) provides two options for layering face coverings:

Use a cloth face covering that has multiple layers of fabric. Wear one disposable mask underneath a cloth face covering. The cloth face covering should push the edges of the disposable mask against your face.

Do not combine two disposable masks. Disposable masks are not designed to fit tightly and wearing more than one will not improve fit.

Do not combine a KN95 mask with any other mask. Only use one KN95 mask at a time.

Gaiters and Face Shields

If you choose to wear a gaiter, choose one with two layers, or fold it to make two layers.

Face shields are not a replacement for face coverings, but should be worn in addition to a face covering. Face shields protect the wearer from droplets getting into their eyes. Since a face shield is open at one end, a face shield by itself will not protect the wearer from breathing in germs or from spreading germs if the wearer is infected and doesn't know it. A face shield is available for any employee who wants or needs one.

How To Put On A Face Covering

Wash hands and fingers with soap and water for at least 20 seconds

If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and fingers and rub them together vigorously until they feel dry.

Determine which side of the face covering is the front

Follow the instructions for the type of face covering you are using

How To Take Off A Face Covering

Avoid touching the outside of the face covering

Remove face covering from the back or the sides

The outside of the face covering is considered contaminated

Wash hands and fingers with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after removing the face covering

If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and fingers and rub them together until they feel dry.