



Loudoun County Public Schools Protocol for Face Coverings

Requirement:

LCPS requires all staff members, visitors, and students older than 2 years of age to wear cloth or disposable face coverings at all times, except as referenced below in the “Periodic Breaks” and “Exceptions” sections. This includes while in the LCPS workplace, at school, at school activities, and while entering, exiting, and riding the school bus.

Students and staff must wear face coverings at all times even if six feet of separation is maintained. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), COVID-19 can be spread by people who do not have symptoms and do not know that they are infected. Wearing a face covering in addition to physical distancing provides added protection.

The use of cloth or disposable face coverings does not replace the need to practice other public health mitigation strategies such as maintaining six feet of separation from others, cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces routinely in all public settings, staying home when sick, or frequently washing your hands.

Although a person may believe that they will be able to maintain a 6-foot separation, they cannot control the actions of others who may not adhere to the physical distancing expectation. Six feet is generally considered a safe distance, however, coughs and sneezes can send droplets up to 3 times further than normal breathing.

Proper Wear:

Disposable or cloth face coverings are to be worn properly to comply with this requirement. The face covering must cover the nose and mouth and be secured under the chin. It should fit snugly against the sides of the face with little to no gaps. Face coverings with clear panels are permitted provided they cover both the nose and mouth and fit snugly against the sides of the face with little to no gaps. The CDC does not recommend the use of masks or cloth masks for source control if they have an exhalation valve or vent. Masks with one-way valves or vents allow exhaled air to be expelled out through holes in the material. This can allow exhaled respiratory droplets to reach others and potentially spread the COVID-19 virus. Face coverings with an exhalation valve or vent should not be worn as the CDC does not recommend using this type.

Periodic Breaks:

Wearing a cloth face covering consistently, every day, all day, and without a break can be challenging. School teams will coordinate times when a “face covering break” can be safely implemented while maintaining 6 feet of physical separation between individuals. An appropriate example would be a scheduled work or school break such as lunch or during recess that is held outside with adherence to physical distancing requirements.

Exceptions:

Exceptions to this requirement will be made in accordance with the CDC and the [Virginia Department of Health](#) (VDH) recommendations regarding face coverings. Additionally, students and staff will not be required to wear a cloth or disposable face covering in the following circumstances:

- while eating or drinking.
- while exercising, engaged in high intensity aerobic activity, or school athletics if 10 feet of physical distance can be maintained by all participants (instructors, students, and spectators). Spectators must wear face coverings consistent with any active Executive Orders.
- when alone in a classroom, office, or a cubicle with walls 7 feet or higher, with the door closed.
- while communicating with people who are hearing impaired for which the mouth needs to be visible.

Employees who believe they qualify for a medical exception to the face covering guidelines must contact the Leave and Disability Office for certification. Only those employees who qualify under the ADA for a reasonable accommodation will be granted an exception. Reasonable accommodation may include the wearing of a face shield in lieu of a cloth mask, telework, and use of leave.

IEP teams may not require documentation from a medical professional for students with disabilities who are known to need support related to sensory processing disorders as these students may have challenges wearing a face covering.

LCPS Issued Face Coverings:

Employees: LCPS will provide face coverings to full-time and part-time employees. Employees may supply their own face coverings at their own expense. Face coverings do not have to be commercially manufactured to comply with the LCPS requirement. Emblems, words, or pictures on the face covering must comply with the [Policy 7564 Dress Code for Staff](#).

Students: Students are expected to supply their own disposable or cloth face covering to comply with this expectation. LCPS has purchased cloth face coverings for students from economically disadvantaged families, and these are available upon request from the school health office. School staff (health office staff or school administration) will provide a face covering to a student if they do not have one. Parents are asked to ensure their student wears a face covering to, from, and during school as recommended by the CDC and VDH and as required by LCPS. Emblems, words, or pictures on the face covering must comply with the Student Code of Conduct and [Policy 8270 Student Dress Code](#).

Enforcement:

Students, staff, and visitors are expected to follow the face covering requirement while at school/work, at school activities, and while entering, exiting, and riding the school bus.

Students who are not wearing a face covering will be directed to comply with the requirement. If they do not have a face covering, one will be provided to them. If a student refuses to comply, staff will meet with the student and contact the parent/guardian to discuss and identify the reason the student refuses to comply. If non-compliance is related to financial need, the school-based team will develop a plan of action to support the student's compliance with the requirement. If the student continues to not wear a face covering after the school-based team has met to support the student's compliance, disciplinary consequences may be given and the student may be removed from participation in the hybrid (in-person) instructional model.

All employees are expected to comply with the face covering requirement for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues, and others. Employees who are not wearing a face covering will be asked to comply with the requirement. If they do not have a face covering, one will be provided to them. If after being directed, the employee continues to demonstrate non-compliance with the requirement, the employee may be disciplined according to school board policy.

Parents/guardians, vendors, and visitors to LCPS buildings are expected to demonstrate a high level of community concern for self and others to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Parents/guardians, vendors, and visitors will be reminded that face coverings are required while inside a school or administration building and asked to put on a face covering in accordance with the Governor's executive order regarding face coverings and CDC recommendations.