

Face Mask Guidelines



Face masks are a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the mask coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. This is called “source control.”

We now understand the role that respiratory droplets play in the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. The use of masks is particularly important to prevent the spread of the virus, especially among asymptomatic individuals, in settings where people are close to each other, or where social distancing is difficult to maintain.

Based on consistent evidence from clinical and laboratory studies that show masks reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth, as well as research showing successful school openings around the globe that use this tool as a mitigation measure, **WCGS is following the ISBE and IDPH guidelines and will require face coverings for anyone entering the school building.**

We ask that all face masks worn in the school building adhere to the following guidelines:

1. **Fit:** Face masks should fit snugly and comfortably and cover the face from over the nose to below the chin.
2. **Secure:** They must be secured with ties or ear loops or stretch around the back of the head.
3. **Multi-layered:** Cloth face masks should be comprised of multiple, breathable fabric layers—at least 2-ply or with a pocket for a replaceable filter. (Cotton, the most widely used material for cloth masks, performs better at higher weave densities and can make a significant difference in filtration efficiencies.) Disposable surgical-type masks should have 3 layers.
4. **No vents or exhalation valves:** The exhalation valves (or vents) allow exhaled air to be expelled out through the holes in the material which can then allow exhaled respiratory droplets to be released.
5. **Washable or disposable:** You should be able to wash the face masks regularly, or dispose of them after use.
6. **Labeled:** They should have the student’s first and last name written somewhere on the fabric clearly so it can be returned if misplaced.

Important handling instructions:

- Always wash your hands before putting on the face mask, and after taking off the face mask.
- Once the mask is on your face, don’t touch it until it is time to be removed.
- Never touch the part of the mask that goes against the nose or mouth.

How to clean:

- The CDC recommends that face masks are cleaned after each use (at the end of every school day).
- You can include your mask with your regular laundry in the washing machine (remove any filters first).
- Use regular laundry detergent and the warmest appropriate water setting for the cloth used to make the mask.
- To dry, use the highest heat setting and leave it in the dryer until completely dry.

Face Mask FAQs

My child is having a difficult time wearing a mask. What should I do?

Begin by emphasizing that wearing a mask is something that we all can do to work together to protect the health of our entire school community. You can also reassure them that there will be times during the school day when they will be able to take a “mask break.”

It is important to clarify with children that the masks they wear to school do not reduce the amount of oxygen they are breathing. It may, however, make their breathing FEEL different because their breath feels warmer on their faces when they have a mask on. See tips below to help your child learn how to become comfortable wearing a face mask.

Contact your physician directly if your child cannot wear a face mask at school for medical reasons. We are required to have a doctor’s note on file with suggested alternative mitigation measures that can be used if a medical condition prevents the wearing of a face mask.

In the end, recognize that teachers are excellent at setting expectations around children’s behavior — and getting them to follow through. And children tolerate things well when they see their peers doing it too.

We have not gone anywhere that requires a face mask. What can I do to help my child become accustomed to wearing one?

Prior to the first day of school, have your students PRACTICE wearing a face mask at home for progressively longer periods of time.



If you are just introducing your student to wearing a mask, start out in 15-minute increments at a time, and have them participate in an engaging activity that they enjoy while wearing it. Build up to 45-minute increments over the course of several days and strive to make it a fun, positive experience.



A fun activity to help your child get used to their mask is giving them a “mystery candy” (try different flavored Tic Tacs) to suck on while wearing it. Have them explore not only how it tastes but how it SMELLS, since the scent of it will be stronger inside the mask.



Do fun experiments while wearing face masks. Try to blow out a candle or move a feather with your breath. Determine what is easy to smell through a mask (crushed garlic, perfume, peppermint oil) and what smells can't be detected (a strawberry or mild hand soap).

Is it okay if my student wants to wear a Buff/neck gaiter to cover their nose and mouth?

Buffs and neck gaiters can be worn at school to cover the nose and mouth, but they **must comply with the required thickness** (see #3 above). You can find these types of face coverings online with filter-pockets for replaceable filters if this is the preferred style. ([Amazon Kid's Neck Gaiter with Filter Pocket](#))

Can my child's face mask have a picture or pattern on it?

Face masks worn at school can have age-appropriate pictures and patterns. They can represent a favorite sports team or activity, or favorite animals.

It is not appropriate for school face masks to bear symbols or characters from mature movies, video games or social media platforms, to have suggestive or disrespectful facial expressions, or to have statements, pictures or symbols counter to WCGS's culture and mission.

WCGS Spirit Wear face masks will be available for purchase.

Do you have suggestions on where I can find good face masks for my child?

Online shopping offers the greatest selection of face masks. Here are some ideas:

[Pediatric Surgical Mask](#)

[Neck Gaiter with Filter for Teens/Adults](#)

[School Mask Pack by Crayola](#)

[Vistaprint Masks for Kids and Adults](#)

