

FACE COVERINGS

The Manchester Essex Regional School District is committed to providing a safe environment as schools reopen during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks or face coverings. Therefore, in accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice.

A face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, on school grounds and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed.

All students grades PK – 12 and all staff will be required to wear masks when attending the Manchester Essex Public Schools, with limited exceptions for students with medical, behavioral or other challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings. Parents may not excuse their child from the face mask requirement by signing a waiver. This requirement includes the wearing of masks on all school property as well as on all school buses and at school bus stops.

Masks may be disposable or reusable and will need to: 1. fully cover the nose and mouth and secure under the chin; 2. be made with at least 2 layers of breathable material; 3. fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face and be secured with ties or ear loops. Based on guidance from health authorities, neck gaiters, open-chin triangle bandanas and face covering containing valves, mesh material or holes of any kind will not be considered appropriate face coverings.

Families are to provide students with two or more clean masks for school each day. If a staff member or a student does not have a face covering, that individual will be provided with a face covering by the school.

Additionally, face masks or face coverings will not be required when six foot social distancing is enforced:

- during mask breaks;
- while eating or drinking;
- during outdoor physical education classes

Students who are in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action or the student may be removed from the school building for in-person learning until such time as they can comply with the requirement or the requirement is lifted.

Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of School Committee policy.

Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/district facility.

This policy will remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee.

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/may-1-2020-masks-and-face-coverings/download>

REFS.:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Considerations for Wearing Masks -
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – Reopening
Guidelines - <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>

Commonwealth of Massachusetts – Mask Up MA! –
<https://www.mass.gov/news/mask-up-ma>

SOURCE: MASC – August 2020

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