

Recommendations for Use of Face Coverings in the School Setting

This guidance outlines infection control and personal protective equipment (PPE) recommendations, in addition to goals and strategies for Maricopa County K - 12 schools*¹ to respond to community spread of coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19).

W – Wear a face covering

W – Walk 6 feet apart

W – Wash your hands

For this document, “face covering” refers to a well-fitting reusable or disposable face covering that fully covers a person’s nose and mouth. CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings.

REQUIRED:

- All students, staff and visitors must wear face coverings.
- Wear face coverings when inside school buildings, anywhere on school grounds, and at school-related activities, whether indoor or outdoor.
- Face coverings must be worn by students and staff on buses or other public transportation vehicles.
- The face covering must cover both the nose and mouth. Always keep it in place. Students and staff should not touch the eyes, nose, or mouth when removing or adjusting a face covering. Wash hands or use hand sanitizer immediately after removing or adjusting the face covering.
- Share guidance and information with staff, students, and families on the proper use, wearing, removal, and cleaning of cloth face coverings, such as [CDC's guidance on wearing and removing cloth face masks](#) and [CDC's use of cloth face coverings](#).

STRONGLY RECOMMENDED:

- Provide cloth face coverings for staff, other adults, and students
- Provide disposable face coverings for staff, visitors, or students who do not have a cloth face covering when they arrive at school
- Ask staff, students and families to launder cloth face coverings using hot water and a high heat dryer (if available) between uses

Exceptions

Exceptions are applicable under the following circumstances:

- The individual has a medical or behavioral condition or disability and cannot wear a face covering (including, but not limited to, any person who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious or incapacitated, or is otherwise unable to put on or remove the face covering without assistance)
- When actively eating or drinking
- When strenuously exercising or swimming

¹ * Preschools associated with K-12 schools should follow the guidance for Child Care Centers

- When seeking to communicate with someone with hearing loss in a way that requires the mouth to be visible
- When working at home or when in a vehicle alone or with household members
- An individual may temporarily remove a face covering for identification purposes or medical services
- Children under two (2) years of age should not wear a face covering

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

- Deaf and Hard of Hearing people often use lip reading to help understand what those around them are saying. Other communication strategies that can be used in this situation include:
 - A cloth face covering that has a clear plastic area that allows the lips to be visible
 - Writing notes back and forth using different writing utensils
 - Writing on a white board to communicate
 - Using a free speech to text app on mobile device
 - Gesturing
 - If needed, ensure adequate physical distance (minimum 6 feet), removing cloth face covering long enough to communicate. RECOMMEND use of a clear plastic face shield if this method is necessary. This method should not be used for prolonged periods of time.
- Individuals with a medical or behavioral condition or disability may be unable to wear a cloth face covering. Be sure to take other steps to help avoid unnecessary exposure. Other mitigation strategies include physical distancing of greater than 6 feet, a physical barrier or face shield. At least one individual should wear a face covering in such situations.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Cloth Face Coverings
 - Ideally cloth face coverings should be washed when they become wet or visibly soiled and at least daily. Have a bag or bin available to keep your cloth face coverings in until you can wash them. Launder the face coverings with detergent and hot water and dry on a hot cycle. If you must re-wear your cloth face covering before washing, wash your hands immediately after putting it back on and avoid touching your face.
 - Discard cloth face coverings that:
 - No longer cover the nose and mouth
 - Have stretched out or damaged ties or straps
 - Cannot stay on the face
 - Have holes or tears in the fabric
- Face Shields
 - Plastic face shields that wrap around the sides of the wearer's face and extend to below the chin are an allowed substitute **ONLY** for individuals who are unable to wear a cloth face covering.
 - [Per CDC](#) - It is not known if face shields provide any benefit as source control to protect others from the spray of respiratory particles. CDC **does not recommend use of face shields**



for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings. Some people may choose to use a face shield when sustained close contact with other people is expected. If face shields are used without a mask or cloth face covering, they should wrap around the sides of the wearer's face and extend to below the chin. Disposable face shields should only be worn for a single use. Reusable face shields should be cleaned and disinfected after each use. Plastic face shields for newborns and infants are NOT recommended.