

Provo City School District
Policy Series 3000: Students

Policy No. 3420 P1

Pandemic Face Covering Requirements and Exemptions

Due to a public health pandemic, specific restrictions and requirements for students, parents, staff, and visitors at schools may be mandated by state and local health and government officials. Face coverings are considered somewhat effective in slowing the spread of a respiratory virus, and therefore may be mandated that all persons entering into public school buildings for any purpose are required to wear a face covering during the duration of or phases of a community outbreak.

Further, some persons entering into local schools may have a disability, developmental, medical, or mental health conditions precludes them from the face covering requirement. Such needs will be addressed by school officials on a case-by-case basis guided by this procedure and the accompanying exemption request form.

Face Covering Mandate During a Pandemic

The district will align its definition and guidance for face covering with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Utah County Health Department (UCHD). When it is determined that face covering are mandatory, the following guideline and requirements will be in place:

- a) The district expects that all individuals visiting, working in, or attending the school whether in a school or district building, or at a designated school-sponsored activity are required to wear a face covering during the duration of their visit and/or participation (see qualifying exceptions below in this procedure).
- b) A face covering means a cloth mask that covers both the nose and mouth. A cloth face covering is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears, or is wrapped around the lower face and can be made of synthetic or natural fabrics. A plastic face shield is allowable for a teacher/employee directed instructional need, or as an accommodation for an approved exemption request (see exemption request form 3420 F1).
- c) Unless a qualifying exemption has been approved, students and staff members who use district transportation are required to wear approved face coverings for the duration of their transportation experience.

Exceptions to the Face Covering Mandate

There are certain exceptions to the Face Covering Mandate. These exceptions will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and are subject to change based upon the recommendations

of state and local authorities. The exceptions to the Face Covering Mandate include the following:

- a) Individuals who maintain physical distance of at least six feet from any individual when outdoors;
- b) Individuals who are eating and/or drinking while indoors while maintaining a physical distance of at least six feet from other individuals;
- c) a child who is:
 - younger than three years of age; or
 - three years or older if the parent, guardian, or caretaker cannot safely place a face covering on the child's face.
- d) Individuals with medical and/or mental health condition(s), or disabilities that prevent them from wearing a face covering. This includes individuals with medical conditions for whom wearing a face covering could cause harm or dangerously obstruct breathing, or who may be unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance;
- e) Individuals who may be deaf or hard of hearing while communicating with others, or an individual who is communicating with an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing where the ability to see the mouth is essential to that communication, in which case a face shield or alternate face protection such as a plexiglass barrier should be utilized;
- f) Individuals who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or an accommodation under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, that would necessitate exempting those individuals from wearing a face covering;
- g) Individuals who are receiving or providing services involving the nose and/or face which temporarily removing the face covering is necessary to perform such a service; or
- h) Individuals participating in school-sponsored extracurricular activities or physical education classes so long as said individuals comply with Appendix C of the Phased Guidelines for the General Public and Businesses to Maximize Public Health and Economic Reactivation (<https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/Health/Phased-Guidelines-Version-4.9.0.pdf>).

Requirements for Granting an Exemption to the Face Covering Mandate

If an individual requests exemption from the Face Covering mandate based upon health reasons or under the exemption clause for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 plan, the following may be required:

- a) In the case of a health and/or disability exception, an individual requesting the exemption must inform their principal or designee and complete the exemption form associated with this policy (Pandemic Mandated Student Face Covering Request for Exemption). A medical directive verifying an individual condition or disability that would preclude a student from the face covering mandate must be provided by a verified health official; and
- b) In the case of a student requesting an exemption based upon an IEP or Section 504 condition, the Local Educational Agency (LEA) or 504 Coordinator must document the accommodation in accordance with 34 CFR 104.33(a) as part of the student's IEP or Section 504 accommodation plan.

Non-compliance of the Face Covering Mandate and Policy

During the time face coverings are required, if an individual does not qualify for one of the outlined exemptions, it is assumed the individual would not be allowed on a school bus or to be physically present in school. This exclusion will last until the public health order expires or the individual decides to begin wearing a face covering at school.

When a student, by his own choice or at the direction of a parent, refuses to comply with the mask requirement, the school will exclude the student from school. Although this is a difficult stance for schools to take, the law clearly allows both the state to enact such requirements and the schools to enforce such requirement by excluding students who choose not to comply in times of emergency such as a pandemic. While school staff should respectfully recognize a parent or student's opinion, the public health order is clear and the student who does not qualify for an exception may not remain in school. Assure the student and parents it is the desire of school officials that the time period for the exclusion will be as short as possible and inform them of alternative educational opportunities available.

In the event a student refuses to abide by the Pandemic Face Covering Mandate and policy and is not eligible for exemption for the reasons set forth in this policy, the student will be given two options:

- 1) End the non-compliance by wearing an appropriate face covering and remain eligible to attend school, in person, according to the school schedule; or
- 2) Enroll in the eSchool/Home Study option until such time as the Mandatory Face Covering Mandate is lifted or the student is willing to adhere to the policy.

Accordingly, students who previously failed to comply with the Face Covering Mandate and Policy shall be permitted to re-enroll and attend school, in person, following written confirmation, signed by the student and the student's parent or guardian, that the students will comply with the Face Covering Mandate and Policy. Subsequent refusals to comply with the Face Covering Mandate and Policy shall result in the student being referred to the eSchool/Home Study option that is most feasible for continuation of academic progress.

In the case of a Face Covering Mandate, the order applies to all individuals while in any

public or private school facility. Visitors who will not abide by the Face Covering Mandate and policy shall be asked to attend school activities through a virtual option. Nothing in this policy requires the District to provide a virtual option for visitors who decline to abide by the Face Covering Mandate and policy if a virtual option is not otherwise available. So long as the Face Covering Mandate is in force, all patrons, including parents, guardians, caregivers, students, and staff shall abide by the policy by wearing the appropriate face coverings in school or at a school/district-sponsored activity unless otherwise exempt as provided in this Policy.