

## 8450.01 - **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT DURING PANDEMIC/EPIDEMIC EVENTS**

During times of elevated communicable disease community spread (pandemic or epidemic), or declared a public health emergency, the District Administrator may issue periodic guidance and procedures the contents of which the District Administrator will regularly bring to the Board for review and potential actions in alignment with public health officials and/or in accordance with government edicts and including any Pandemic Plan developed by the District's Pandemic Response Team under Policy 8420.01.

The District Administrator may incorporate requirements for the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which may include requirements that all school staff, volunteers, and visitors (including vendors) wear appropriate face masks/coverings inside District buildings and/or outside on school grounds unless it is unsafe to do so or where doing so would significantly interfere with the District's educational or operational processes. Individuals with valid medical reasons for not wearing a face covering may be exempted from this requirement, as determined by the District Administrator.

Any PPE required other than face coverings, will be provided by the District. This may include disposable gloves, gowns, shoe coverings, or other PPE appropriate for the threat faced and an employee's likelihood of exposure in the performance of job responsibilities.

In addition, the Board authorizes the District Administrator to require that students in kindergarten and higher shall wear a face covering unless they are unable to do so for a health or developmental reason. Efforts will be made to reduce any social stigma for a student who, for medical or developmental reasons, cannot and should not wear a mask.

If face masks/coverings are required, and no exception is applicable, students shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct/Student Discipline Code, and in accordance with policies of the Board. Staff members shall work with all students who are exhibiting distress or otherwise having difficulty properly wearing face coverings to assist the students in complying with the requirements.

Students may be reassigned by the District Administrator to an online/virtual learning environment if the District Administrator determines that reassignment is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or others.

During times of elevated communicable disease community spread as determined by the Board in consultation with health professionals, all students are required to wear masks while being transported on District school buses or other modes of school transportation, subject to and consistent with the exceptions and procedures applied to students at school.

### **Use of Mask/Face Covering**

Cloth face coverings/masks should:

- A. fully cover the mouth, nose, and chin;
- B. fit snugly against the side of the face so there are no gaps;
- C. not create difficulty breathing while worn; and
- D. be held securely through either a tie, elastic, etc. to prevent slipping.

Facial masks/coverings generally should not include respirators unless medically indicated, or masks designed to be worn for costume purposes.

All employee facial masks/coverings shall meet the requirements of the appropriate dress/staff grooming policies (Policy 3216/Policy 4216). All student facial masks/coverings shall meet the requirements of the appropriate Student Code of Conduct/Student Discipline Code and Policy 5511 Dress and Grooming.

Any person may be required to temporarily remove a face mask or covering when instructed to do so for identification or security purposes. Failure to comply with such a request violates this policy and may lead to disciplinary or other action.

Exceptions to the use of masks/face coverings include when:

- A. facial masks/coverings in the school setting are prohibited by law or regulation;
- B. facial masks/coverings are not advisable for health reasons;
- C. facial masks/coverings are in violation of the school's documented safety policies;
- D. facial masks/coverings are not required when the staff works alone in an assigned work area;
- E. there is a functional (practical) reason for a staff member or volunteer not to wear a facial mask/covering in the workplace;
- F. settings where cloth masks might present a safety hazard (e.g., science labs); or
- G. to assist with communication for hearing impaired students.;

The District Administrator may be required to communicate with local public health officials regarding exceptions granted to PPE requirements; therefore, if any exceptions are made to the requirement for facial coverings, the request for such exception must be submitted in writing to an employee's supervisor, to the building principal in the event the request comes from a member of the public, and to the building administration in the event the request involves a student. All requests shall be submitted with appropriate documentation. A decision on the request will be provided in writing.

### **Use of Face Shields**

Face shields that wrap around the face and extend below the chin may be permitted as an alternative to cloth face masks/coverings with permission of the District Administrator as the Board recognizes that face shields may be useful in some situations, including:

- A. when interacting with students, such as those with disabilities, where communication could be impacted;
- B. when interacting with English Language learners or when teaching a foreign language;
- C. settings where cloth masks might present a safety hazard (e.g., science labs); or
- D. for individuals who have difficulty wearing a cloth face covering.

If a staff member receives approval from the District Administrator after discussing his/her request not to wear a face mask/covering/shield due to a physical, mental, or developmental health condition, and/or if wearing a mask/covering/shield would lead to a medical emergency or would introduce significant safety concerns, the District Administrator may also discuss other possible accommodations for the staff member. Such discussion shall follow Board policies and guidelines under the ADA.

School nurses or staff who care for individuals with symptoms consistent with those of a communicable disease must use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), provided by the school, in accordance with OSHA standards.

When facial masks/coverings are required by the District Administrator, and no exception has been applied, staff members who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with policies of the Board.

© Neola 2020