



Operating Protocol for Policy 8450

A face mask must always be worn on school property, facilities, including school buses and/or engaged in school activities in accordance with Board Policy 8450.

There are limited circumstances when an alternative face covering is permitted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in lieu of a face mask in school settings set forth in guidance dated August 11, 2020 titled “Guidance for K-12 School Administrators on the Use of Cloth Face Coverings in Schools”:

CDC recognizes that wearing face masks may not be possible in every situation or for some people. In some situations, wearing a face mask may exacerbate a physical or mental health condition, lead to a medical emergency, or introduce significant safety concerns. Adaptations and alternatives should be considered whenever possible to increase the feasibility of wearing a face mask or to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading if it is not possible to wear one.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:

- Children younger than 2 years old.
- Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious.
- Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.

Appropriate and consistent use of cloth face coverings may be challenging for some students, teachers, and staff, including:

- Younger students, such as those in early elementary school.
- Students, teachers, and staff with severe asthma or other breathing difficulties.
- Students, teachers, and staff with special educational or healthcare needs, including intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, and sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

While cloth face coverings are strongly encouraged to reduce the spread of COVID-19, CDC recognizes there are specific instances when wearing a cloth face covering may not be feasible. In these instances, parents, guardians, caregivers, teachers, and school administrators should consider adaptations and alternatives whenever possible. They may need to consult with healthcare providers for advice about wearing cloth face coverings.

Consider use of clear face coverings that cover the nose and wrap securely around the face by some teachers and staff. Clear face coverings should be determined not to cause any breathing difficulties or over heating for the wearer. Teachers and staff who may consider using clear face coverings include:

- Those who interact with students or staff who are deaf or hard of hearing, per the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Teachers of young students learning to read
- Teachers and students in English as a second language classes
- Teachers of students with disabilities

Clear face coverings are not face shields. **CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings because of a lack of evidence of their effectiveness for source control.**

Therefore, considering the CDC guidance of “adaptations and alternatives should be considered whenever possible to increase the feasibility of wearing a face mask or to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading if it is not possible to wear one”, the Board will make the following allowances to Board Policy 8450:

- a. Students who need a break from their face mask, may do so with teacher permission provided social distancing can be maintained to the best of their ability.
- b. Employees who need a break from wearing their face mask while on school property, may do so if alone in their own office or classroom or outdoors maintaining social distancing. An employee may not utilize common space, for example a conference room, break room, stairwell or any unoccupied location for a mask break. A cloth face mask must be worn during all other times and locations.
- c. While eating breakfast or lunch or while drinking water– No face covering is required while eating or drinking in designated areas as long as social distancing practices are in place.
- d. No face covering is required during physical education classes, recess, or other outdoor activities. Students must wear cloth face masks to and from physical education class and to and from the recess location or activity.
- e. Face shields that completely cover the face, wrap around the face and extend below the chin, will be allowed to be worn by students in Grades PreK-5 and students with disabilities only in the classroom during specific instructional periods as long as either social distancing practices are in place and/or physical barriers of separation are in place between students. A cloth face mask must be worn during all other times and locations. Face shields are not substitutes for cloth face masks nor are being used for normal everyday activities and only allowed in this narrow use.
- f. Face shields that completely cover the face, wrap around the face and extend below the chin, will be allowed to be worn by teachers in all grade levels only in the classroom during specific instructional periods as long as social distancing practices are in place between the teacher and the students. A cloth face mask must be worn after specific instruction has been given or when social distancing cannot be followed between teacher and student, and during all other times and locations. Face shields are not substitutes for cloth face masks nor are being used for normal everyday activities and only allowed in this narrow use.

For school athletic activities, please refer to the School District's Return to Training Guidance for further guidance on face coverings for student athletes.

Other allowances will be considered in accordance with the District's Policies and Procedures as well as all applicable laws.

In this operating protocol for Board Policy 8450, the term face mask, cloth face mask or cloth face covering are interchangeable.

Single use face masks approved by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are allowed under this policy.

Per CDC Guidance "The purpose of masks is to keep respiratory droplets from reaching others to aid with source control. Masks with one-way valves or vents allow exhaled air to be expelled out through holes in the material. This can allow exhaled respiratory droplets to reach others and potentially spread the COVID-19 virus. **Therefore, CDC does not recommend using masks if they have an exhalation valve or vent.**"

This policy may be subject to change as the CDC updates school health guidelines.

The School Board of Manatee County has committed to review this policy every 90 days so they will re-evaluate this policy on or before their regularly scheduled School Board meeting on February 9, 2021.

Updated November 10, 2020