

Face Covering Policy

----- - USE OF FACE MASKS/COVERINGS

The Board of Education is committed to providing students, staff, and visitors with a safe and healthy environment.

In order to maintain a healthy environment, the Board will follow the mandates and requirements set forth by the federal government, Center for Disease Control, Ohio Governor, Ohio State Health Department, Clermont County Health Department, Ohio Department of Education, and other entities (“Directing Entities”) as it relates to the protecting the health of students. If any of these Directing Entities or District Administration requires staff, students, and/or visitors to wear cloth face coverings / masks while attending school, reporting to work at a school, or visiting a school, the District’s Administration will follow and enforce such directives.

As of July 2020, pursuant to *COVID-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools* issued by the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Education, all staff members must wear face coverings.

Bus and van drivers shall wear a face covering when passengers are boarding or unboarding the vehicle. Driver shall also wear a face covering when vehicle is stationary while idle and the parking break engaged and or the engine is not in operation. Only time the driver is not required to wear a face covering is when the vehicle is moving, parking brake not engaged, or braked while the engine is in operation and transmission is in the neutral, drive or reverse gear position.

While on any School Board owned vehicle – All students passengers are required to wear a face covering. Students will need to have face covering on prior to boarding the vehicle and keep the face covering on during the entire duration of being on board of the vehicle.

While in school It is strongly recommended that students in 3rd grade and higher wear a face covering unless they are unable to do so for a health or developmental reason.

Cloth Face coverings / masks should:

- Fully cover the mouth, nose, and chin;
- Fit snugly against the side of the face so there are no gaps;
- Not create difficulty breathing while worn; and
- Held secure through either a tie, elastic, etc. to prevent slipping.

Face coverings / masks shall not include surgical masks or respirators (as those should be reserved for healthcare works), masks designed to be worn for costume purposes, etc. All face

coverings / masks shall meet the requirements of the appropriate dress code policies and/or codes of conduct.

Exceptions to this face coverings policy may be made for the following:

- Children younger than 2 years old;
- Anyone who has trouble breathing;
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance;
- Facial coverings are in violation of documented industry standards;
- Facial coverings will significantly interfere with the learning process;
- Facial coverings are in violation of documented safety policies or documented industry standards;
- Individuals who have received approval from District administration after discussing their request not to wear a face covering / mask due to a physical, mental or developmental health condition, if wearing a mask would lead to a medical emergency or would introduce significant safety concerns.
 - In this exception, the District administration may also discuss other possible accommodations for the student or staff member. Such discussion shall follow District policies and procedures under Section 504 and the ADA.

Bethel-Tate Local Schools District is required to provide written justification to the local health officials upon request explaining why a staff member is not required to wear a facial covering in the school. Therefore, if any of the above exceptions are made, the request for such exception must be submitted in writing to the superintendent, and a decision on the request will be provided in writing. An individual may be required to wear a face shield or other face covering as appropriate for an accommodation of this face covering requirement.

Any school nurse or staff who care for individuals with COVID-19 symptoms must use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) in accordance with OSHA standards.

If face masks / coverings are required, and no exception has been applied, students and/or staff who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the applicable Student Code of Conduct/Student Discipline Code, staff Code of Conduct, and in accordance with policies of the Board.