

*BOSCOBEL AREA SCHOOLS
ADMINISTRATION & SCHOOL HEALTH TEAM ~ COVID-19 PLANNING*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FACE COVERINGS

- Staff should be required to wear personal/cloth face coverings at all times at school, unless contraindicated. Exceptions may be made for outdoor activity and physical activity.
- Students should be required to wear personal/cloth face coverings at all times at school, unless contraindicated. Exceptions may be made for outdoor activity and physical activity.
- Staff and students should be required to wear personal/face coverings when transported by school vehicles, upon entry/exit to buildings, during passing times, and in any common areas, especially since physical distancing may not be possible.
- School nurses and others providing health care in school settings will follow specific recommendations for face coverings (typically surgical/procedure masks or other respirators, depending upon the risk level of tasks to be performed and availability of PPE supplies).
- Other staff identified to be at higher risk due to the aerosolizing of respiratory droplets (including but not limited to band teachers and choir teachers) may be directed to wear face coverings such as surgical/procedure mask or other respirators.

The planning team agrees that should we return to some level of in-person learning with mandated personal/cloth face coverings, we will be able to adequately assess effectiveness and compliance (after approximately 4-6 weeks). Should personal/cloth face coverings prove well tolerated (and risk assessment allows), the district may be able to consider transitioning to a fuller capacity. The planning team also recognizes that face coverings are an important mitigation effort widely supported and recommended by public health organizations.

CLOTH FACE COVERINGS IN SCHOOLS

What Families Need to Know

A cloth face covering covers the nose and mouth while being secured to the head with ties or straps, or simply wrapped around the lower face. This document provides answers to some questions on how to effectively use and clean cloth face coverings. The CDC and DHS offer additional information on cloth face coverings and how to properly wear one.

Who should wear cloth face coverings?



Cloth face coverings are strongly recommended for both students and staff who are able to wear and remove them properly. Cloth face coverings can help prevent the wearer from spreading disease if they are asymptomatic (do not show any symptoms) or do not realize they are sick.

However, there are valid concerns that may prevent an individual from wearing one safely. Cloth face coverings should NOT be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the covering without assistance. Medical considerations, including autism spectrum disorder and respiratory conditions, as well as traumatic personal experiences, mean that some individuals are not able to wear a face covering safely. Wearing a cloth face covering may be dangerous or stressful for individuals with disabilities and young children. Individuals may also not be able to wear a face covering safely due to racial profiling or discrimination. Access to clean, appropriate, or multiple face coverings may also be a barrier.

How do I talk to my kids about why some people may not be able to wear a face covering?

This is a good opportunity to talk to your children about trauma, racism and discrimination, as well as the need for acceptance, understanding, and empathy regarding the reasons it may not be safe for everyone to wear a cloth face covering. Another opportunity for family discussion is the topic of protecting the health of friends, stressing that it is important for people who are able to wear a cloth face covering to do whatever they can to protect people who are less able to do so. Make sure kids understand that it isn't their job to enforce wearing or not wearing face coverings.



What is the rationale behind using the cloth face coverings?



Current recommendations support wearing cloth face coverings in public spaces where you are not able to stay at least 6 feet apart from others. Cloth face coverings help reduce the chance that you will spread the disease to others if you are asymptomatic or do not realize you are sick. This is because the coverings reduce the release of infectious particles into the air if the wearer speaks, coughs, or sneezes. It is important to note that cloth face coverings do NOT completely prevent the wearer from exposure to infectious particles, especially if you are in close contact with an infected person or if the person is not wearing their own mask.

The more we can help to slow down spread of disease, the more we help in terms of:

- Helping our community by protecting those most at-risk or vulnerable and reducing the burden on our health care system.
- Preventing the disruption of our children's education by reducing the likelihood of having mass absences or switching to virtual learning.
- Helping our economy to get back on its feet by reducing both disease spread and the likelihood of rolling back phases or increasing restrictions.

It seems that the recommendations keep changing—why should my kid wear a face covering?

At this time, the research suggests that wearing a cloth face covering can make a real impact on disease transmission and reduce the risk of spread. It is true that the research has evolved on this topic, and that is because doctors, scientists, and public health professionals are learning more and more about COVID-19 as they continue to treat, study, and track it. We acknowledge that cloth face coverings can be uncomfortable and inconvenient, but they are a valuable tool that we have control over to help decrease the risk of spread and keep our communities safer. Emphasizing this with children and talking to them about how we can all play a role in protecting each other can help make it easier for families to wear cloth face coverings. Further, stressing that every little bit counts and that mistakes (like forgetting to pull the face covering up all the way) are okay as long as they are committed to wearing it. Just like so many topics in childhood, there may still be accidents and mistakes as children learn and adapt to something new, but anytime a cloth face covering is worn, it can help reduce the potential of spreading COVID-19.



DHS (Department of Health Services)

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/protect.htm>

Should I wear a cloth face covering?

Cloth face coverings help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others, which means they are most likely to reduce the spread when they are widely used. They are not a replacement for physical distancing and are most effective when combined with other preventative measures.

When should I wear a cloth face cover?

You should wear a cloth face covering in public settings and whenever you are around people who you don't live with, especially when it is difficult to practice physical distancing. A cloth face covering should only be worn if the person wearing it can safely remove it. While cloth face coverings are strongly recommended, there are valid reasons that individuals cannot wear one, such as medical considerations or fear of racism or discrimination.

How effective are cloth face coverings at preventing the spread of the virus?

Cloth face coverings are recommended because they form a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people. Droplets can release when someone coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice, which is why consistently wearing the face covering is important. This is called source control and is based on what we know about the role respiratory droplets play in the spread of COVID-19, paired with evidence from clinical and laboratory studies that shows cloth face coverings reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth. Because COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet), the use of cloth face coverings is especially important in settings where people are close to each other or where practicing physical distancing is difficult.

CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/cloth-face-cover.html>

Everyone Should...

- Wash your hands often
- Avoid close contact
- **Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others**
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Clean and disinfect
- Monitor your health daily

CDC suggests that all school reopening plans address adherence to behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19. When used consistently and correctly, important mitigation strategies, cloth face coverings are important to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

Cloth face coverings are recommended as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the cloth face covering coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are an example of source control.

Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected.

COVID-19 can be spread to others even if you do not feel sick. A cloth face covering helps prevent a person who is sick from spreading the virus to others. Appropriate and consistent use of cloth face coverings is most important when students, teachers, and staff are indoors and when social distancing of at least 6 feet is difficult to implement or maintain.

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.

WHO (World Health Organization)

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-on-covid-19-and-masks>

There are some settings in which it may not be possible to keep physical distancing and the use of a mask could be helpful to provide a barrier to limit the spread of potentially infectious droplets from someone who is infected. In addition, there is some evidence which suggests that some infected people, without showing symptoms, may be able to transmit the virus others.

For this reason, WHO advises that governments should encourage the use of non-medical fabric masks, which can act as a barrier to prevent the spread of the virus from the wearer to others where there are many cases of COVID-19, for people in the general public where physical distancing of at least 1 meter is not possible – such as, on public transport, in shops or in other confined or crowded environments.