



HOLYOKE COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

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Mask/Face Coverings

Masks/face coverings: As the primary route of transmission for COVID-19 is respiratory, masks or face coverings are among the most critical components of risk reduction. Masks/face coverings protect the general public against COVID-19 infection, with a recent retrospective study estimating near 80% effectiveness in reducing COVID-19 transmission, especially when worn prior to symptom onset. In the United States, states advising face masks/face coverings be worn in public saw a decline in their COVID-19 growth rates, and community-wide mask/face covering usage contributed to control of COVID-19.

At this time, our initial requirements and related guidance are as follows:

- Students in grade 2 and above are required to wear a mask/face covering that covers their nose and mouth.
- Students in kindergarten and grade 1 should be encouraged to wear a mask/face covering.
- Face shields may be an option for those students with medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings.
- Transparent masks may be the best option for both teachers and students in classes for deaf and hard of hearing students. They may also be useful for teachers and younger students who rely on visual / facial cues.
 - Adults, including educators and staff, are required to wear masks/face coverings.
 - **Exceptions to mask/face covering requirements** must be made for those for whom it is not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors. If there is a medical reason, it must be documented. Documentation is not needed for behavioral.
 - **Mask breaks should occur** throughout the day. Breaks should occur when students can be six feet apart and ideally outside or at least with the windows open. There will be 2-3 face mask breaks throughout the day including during lunch time.
- **Masks/face coverings should be provided by the student/family**, but extra disposable face masks are available by the school for students who need them. Reusable masks/face coverings provided by families should be washed by families daily. One reusable cloth mask will be given to every student to use as an option.
- **Masks/face coverings are required to be worn by everyone on the bus during school bus transportation.**

- **Transparent face coverings provide the opportunity for more visual cues** and should be especially considered as an alternative for younger students, students who are deaf and hard of hearing, and their teachers.