



Face Coverings

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June 13 Update

Mayor Adams announced that, starting Monday, June 13, face coverings will be optional for students and staff in early childhood schools or programs.

To maintain the safety of our staff and students, early childhood programs will continue to practice strict COVID-19 protocols, including increased ventilation, a daily health screening, and test kit distribution.

As of June 13, face coverings for early childhood students and staff will become optional indoors, outside, and on school buses. Anyone who chooses to wear a face covering may continue to do so, and students and staff members may request a face covering from their school or program if they need one.

Face coverings are strongly recommended for any staff member or student who knows they have been exposed to COVID-19 within the previous 10 days. Wearing a face covering is still required in medical rooms and nurses' offices. Nurses will have masks on hand for anyone entering who may need one.

March 7 Update

Beginning March 7, face coverings will become optional, indoors and outdoors on NYC public school grounds and on school buses, for all K-12 students and staff with a few exceptions. Please note that while wearing a face covering will no longer be required, anyone who chooses to wear a mask may continue to do so.

Face coverings will continue to be available through your school's custodian engineer. Teachers may continue to ask for a KN95 mask; school should give one to any staff member who asks. These masks are to be used for five days. Custodian engineers

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have adult-sized KN95 masks available for staff and for students who can tolerate a high-grade mask; they also have three-ply surgical masks for students who cannot tolerate a high-grade mask, including younger students.

Face coverings are required:

- When returning from 5-day isolation or quarantine:
 - Anyone returning on Day 6 after a positive COVID-19 diagnosis or after having COVID-19 symptoms without testing is still required to wear a well-fitting face covering (such as a KN95, KF94, or a surgical mask under a cloth mask) at all times on school property through Day 10. If the individual is unable to wear a well-fitting face covering for the duration of the school day, the individual must continue to isolate for 10 days.
- When experiencing COVID-like symptoms:
 - Face coverings are required through Day 10 when an individual is experiencing COVID-like symptoms symptomatic but has been fever-free with a negative COVID-19 diagnostic test performed by a provider (or two negative results from an at-home test taken at least 24 hours apart since the onset of symptoms).
- For children in Early Childhood settings:
 - The indoor face covering mandate is still active for LYFE, EarlyLearn (Infants & Toddlers), 3-K, Pre-K, and 4410 classrooms. Children two years old and older, and all staff in these classrooms, must continue to follow the same masking requirements whether they are in a district school, CBO, or home-based program. Since children under the age of five are not yet eligible to receive the vaccine, face coverings remain our strongest defense against COVID-19 for early childhood populations.
- While in medical rooms/nurses' offices:
 - Wearing a face covering is still required in medical rooms/nurses' offices, as well as in School Based Health Centers. Nurses will have face coverings on hand for anyone entering who needs one.

Face coverings are strongly recommended:

- Following exposure to COVID-19:
 - It is strongly recommended that face coverings be worn when an individual has been exposed or potentially exposed at school (in the same room for 15 minutes or longer with a person who tested positive for COVID-19). Face coverings are also strongly recommended if an individual knows they have been exposed to COVID-19 in any setting within the previous 10 days.

March 7 FAQs ▲

What is the new face covering policy? ▲

Face coverings are optional for K-12 students and staff as of Monday, March 7, with a few exceptions (see above).

What are the policies with regard to students or staff requesting others to wear or not wear masks? ▲

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The decision to wear or not wear a face covering is now entirely up to students, parents and staff; those decisions should be respected and those criticizing others for their decisions should be counseled to respect the choices of others.

What if COVID-19 cases rise again and/or another dangerous COVID-19 variant emerges?

Face coverings have proven to provide a layer of protection against the spread of COVID-19 and our partners at DOHMH and HHC will be closely monitoring all COVID developments, research and data. If new developments require additional layers of protection, the policy regarding face coverings can and will be changed.

Does this new policy apply to younger students (those in LYFE, EarlyLearn, 3-K, Pre-K, and 4410 classrooms)?

No, Early Childhood children and staff must remain masked indoors throughout the DOE, regardless of program setting. These children and staff must follow the same masking requirements whether they are in a district school, CBO, or home-based program. Due to the fact that children under the age of five are not yet eligible to receive the vaccine, face coverings remain our strongest defense against COVID-19 for early childhood populations. This is pursuant to the order of the NYC Health Commissioner.

I have fully vaccinated 5-year-olds in my Pre-K classes. Can they stop wearing their face coverings?

Unfortunately, no. All students in Early Childhood programs, even fully vaccinated ones, must remain masked when indoors in a DOE program or school.

What is the face covering policy for high risk sports and other after-school activities?

Face coverings are optional for those participating in high risk activities.

Please note that the COVID-19 vaccination is still a requirement for all students and staff participating in high-risk Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) sports and afterschool activities during the 2021-22 school year. High-risk sports include football, volleyball, basketball, wrestling, lacrosse (boys), stunt, and rugby. High-risk extra-curricular activities include chorus, musical theater, dance/dance team, band/orchestra , marching band, and cheerleading/step teams/flag team.

How does this impact students and staff who test positive for COVID-19?

The testing policy regarding students and staff returning from a positive COVID-19 test has not changed. Those who test positive for COVID and who are returning to school must be in accordance with our policy: e.g. no fever for 24 hours without medication AND must wear a well-fitting mask on days 6-10 after the onset of symptoms or the date of the positive test, whichever was earlier.



What is the face covering policy for those exposed to students or staff testing positive for COVID-19? ▲

The testing policy has not changed: students and staff in exposed to COVID-19 in classrooms should continue to be given two home tests and test on Day 1 and Day 5, continuing to attend school in person unless they test positive.

Please note that DOHMH strongly recommends, but is not requiring, that those exposed to COVID-19 should wear a well-fitting face covering for ten days after exposure.

How does this new policy impact students on busses? Field trips? Dances and proms? ▲

Face coverings are no longer required on yellow school busses, or on field trips. However, should a venue require face coverings, DOE students and staff must adhere to the venue's policy.

While face coverings are not required at dances or proms (unless otherwise stated by the venue) all students attending the dance/prom must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

February 28 Update ▼

Medical Mask Exemptions for Students

The following sets forth the procedures for families seeking a face covering exemption for their child for medical reasons only:

- Parent/guardian must submit documentation from a doctor or other health care provider specifically documenting the medical condition and why the student's condition makes the student unable to wear or tolerate a face covering.
- The school administration will forward the request to the school's Health Director who will review the request and supporting documentation and may approve the exemption based on such documentation.
- Health Directors with questions about a request or documentation or in need of consultation regarding a request can contact the Office of School Health by emailing aharbaja@health.nyc.gov or calling 718-786-5231.
- Emails with any medical or healthcare documentation must be encrypted.
- Students must be permitted to attend school while requests are reviewed. During the review, the school should provide additional adherence support and additional breaks, explore the use of alternative PPE, and ensure other risk mitigation strategies such as handwashing and physical distancing are adhered to.
- The school must advise the parent of the outcome of the review.

Students with face covering exemptions must continue to adhere to other health and safety requirements, including hand hygiene and physical distancing requirements. Staff working with students with a face covering exemption will be provided with additional PPE.





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