

Masks FAQ

Updated: August 9, 2020 (**This is a fluid document that will continue to receive updates**)

Why is the state requiring masks?

- For the health and safety of the entire community. Masks, distancing and hand hygiene are the best way to stop the spread of COVID-19 among people.
- Canaan Schools requires masks of all students, staff, and visitors. Your mask protects people around you and protects you and allows us to reopen school.
- This is not a Canaan Schools specific rule, it is a requirement outlined in the Safety and Health Guidance for Reopening of Schools issued by the Vermont Department of Health and the Vermont Agency of Education. These guidelines were developed with the input and feedback of Vermonters who are infectious disease experts, practitioners of pediatric medicine, public health experts, and education professionals.

Who will be required to wear a mask?

- Masks are required for both students and staff members in all grades - PreK-12*.
- Exceptions will be rare and will be discussed by the educational and medical team of the individual student/teacher and will require a doctor's note. considered for those with asthma or other health considerations but will require written documentation from your doctor.
- Any other person entering the building will be required to wear a mask as well.

*Special Considerations for Pre-K

- According to the *Health Guidance for Childcare Programs*, "Facial coverings are required for children in all programs in schools, including prekindergarten, as medically and developmentally appropriate."
- Preschool teachers will talk with families further about expectations for facial coverings.

What facial coverings are acceptable?

- Cloth or disposable masks that go over the nose and mouth are expected. Buffs (pulled up over the nose and mouth) and bandanas are acceptable alternatives as long as they cover the nose and mouth.

- Clear face shields do not protect against the spread of the virus as well as masks and are recommended to be used only if there is a medical concern with use of masks. Face shields may be necessary for speech/language or hearing impairment needs. Schools will make this determination and will provide shields to students and staff members who work in these areas.

What do I do if my child has a medical issue that prevents wearing a mask?

- First, be sure that the issue is not just one of comfort, but rather a significant medical issue.
- See your doctor to get written documentation that your child's health needs absolutely prevent wearing a mask. Ask your doctor to be specific about what protective measures your child can use (mask, shield, etc).

What do I do if I cannot afford facial coverings for my child/children?

- Schools will be providing facial coverings for all students and staff in the event they do not have one.

When will students have a break from wearing facial coverings?

- Facial coverings will not be worn during meal and snack times.
- Facial coverings will not be required outdoors as long as individuals are maintaining social distancing of 6 feet or more.
- Staff will be encouraged to hold class time outside when possible and take mask breaks as needed. For this reason, it is of utmost importance that children always have adequate and appropriate clothing for the weather.

What if my child refuses to keep his/her mask on at school?

- Your support is essential in avoiding these refusals. Practice with your children now, at home, in the store and at family gatherings or on outings to get them comfortable with it. Practicing is tremendously helpful. Be a good role model and wear your mask without complaining when appropriate. Make it fun to wear the face covering by choosing a motive that your child feels positive about, such as their favorite animal, american flag and eagle, or their favorite sports team.
- This is a significant safety issue. Administrators will take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of other students and staff.