



Student Cloth Face Covering Use

Parent Information

The What:

Forward Thinking, High Achieving.

The safety measures and procedures used by Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS) to reopen schools are based on the current recommendations from the CDC and the State of Montana as well as the order from the Missoula County Health Board, Health Officer and Missoula City County Health Department (MCCHD). In order to decrease the transmission of COVID-19 from any staff, students or visitors, each person must wear a cloth face covering or mask while at MCPS. This includes all students K-12.

We will allow for exceptions for adults and students who cannot wear a face mask due to medical or developmental issues and during periods of physical exertion.



The Why:

In order to prioritize returning to in-school learning as much as possible, masks are an important prevention tool. We will also just utilize disinfection, physical distancing and hand washing in all of our schools to keep everyone safe.

- Cloth face coverings help prevent germs of the person wearing the mask from reaching other people nearby. This includes when the person wearing the mask sneezes, coughs, talks and even breaths. Think of seeing your breath outside on a cold winter day as potential germs going into the air.
- While it's extremely important that anyone who feels sick stays home from work or school, research indicates that sometimes people may have COVID-19 but not yet have symptoms or never get symptoms but can still give COVID-19 to someone else.
- If all people who can wear a face covering do wear one, then we all are better protected. While most children do not have high risk of complications from COVID-19, some adults and children do have higher risk or live with someone with higher risk.



The How:

- All families should make or purchase two cloth face coverings or masks for each student. Think of this as a needed school supply.¹

¹ Limited cloth face coverings/masks will be available at each school for those who are not able to obtain.

- Invite your child to choose their face covering/masks keeping the following in mind.
- All face coverings/masks should:
 - Have multiple layers of fabric
 - Cover both the mouth and nose
 - Fit snugly against the sides of the face so there are no gaps
 - Not cause difficulty breathing
 - Be tied or otherwise secured to prevent slipping
 - Have appropriate design or logos. Masks are under the same dress code conditions: No wording or graphics that advertise or promote illegal activities, or that contain obscenity or profanity.
- Have your child practice wearing the cloth face covering over the summer.
 - This will help them increase their tolerance, decrease the frequency of touching their mask and face, and learn how to put on and take off properly. Have them wear it inside when they are quiet and cool to start with and definitely have them wear their mask in busy places like grocery stores. Be sure to have them wash their hands after removing.
 - Reward your child's efforts with appreciative words and fun activities.
 - Know that teachers will review why masks are needed and the expectations for wearing them when school starts and as needed throughout the school year. We understand that this is new for all of us but practicing over the summer will be helpful. We hope to be supportive of developmental differences and to continually educate so that the need for discipline is minimal.
- Wash used face masks daily in the washing machine and dryer (warmest setting for the type of material) or hand wash with four teaspoons of bleach per quart of hot water and air dry.

The When:

- Your child should put their face covering/mask on when leaving home or your personal car to go to school.
 - Students are expected to wear their face covering/masks while riding the bus.
- Students will be able to remove face coverings/masks when eating or drinking and will be assisted to have a routine and safe place to put their face covering/mask while it is off for these limited times.
- Students may remove them once they leave school property or once they are off the school bus. However, you may wish to have them only remove the face covering/mask once they arrive home to limit “losing it on the way home.”

For more information, see the District website at: www.mcpsmt.org/covid-19