

File: EBC Supplemental- Interim Policy to address the COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis, School Year 2021-22

Purpose:

A short-term, reviewable policy to address the educational and public health needs presented by the continuing COVID-19 pandemic crisis through the 2021-22 School Year.

The School Committee establishes this Interim Policy, to take effect immediately upon approval by the Committee through June 30, 2022, to:

- Promote the safety of students, faculty, and staff as well as the public health of the Medfield community and the surrounding communities in which our faculty and staff live
- Maintain the highest level of educational services
- Allow the District to implement an empirically sound, medically advised and progressive risk management and normalization plan that is responsive to the changing conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. These conditions may include but are not limited to:
 - community or in-school infection rates,
 - expanding vaccine eligibility and community rate of vaccination,
 - respectful consideration of our community's medically vulnerable population
 - guidance of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and other agencies of state and federal government.
- Ensure support for all students
- Authorize changes to operating protocols, if needed, to operate schools effectively from various venues or platforms;
- Comply with any future emergency orders of the Governor, as well as adhere to or exceed guidance of DESE and other agencies of state and federal government, to the extent locally prudent.

The Interim Policy applies to the following areas:

- Infection Control Through the Use of Face Masks
- Student Attendance
- Visitors in schools and buildings (File KI)

In instances where this Interim Policy is inconsistent with previously established policy, the Interim Policy shall take precedent. For the purpose of this policy, the building principal will be considered the Superintendent's designee throughout.

Infection Control Through the Use of Face Masks

According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of COVID-19 and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks. Therefore, until further notice and with consideration of guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirement is in place in order to enter any school building:

An approved infection control face mask must be worn by all individuals in school buildings and must always cover both the nose and the mouth. The face mask should meet the “Mask Construction” guidelines below, with every effort made for proper use and care.

Mask Construction:

1. Masks must be fitted properly; snugly covering the mouth and nose.
2. Masks should have multiple layers, 3 is ideal, with a tight weave fabric.
3. Fabrics such as polypropylene, cotton (knit), and polyester (knit) are preferable.
4. PM2.5 filter inserts add an additional layer of protection within the pocket of the mask.
5. Face coverings such as masks with air vents, neck gaiters, or bandanas do not meet the standard of the district’s infection control regulations.

Proper use and care:

1. When wearing the mask and breathing out hard, you should feel your breath on your cheeks and ears, not toward your eyes.
2. Cloth masks should be washed each day after use.
3. Wash or sanitize hands after putting on and taking off a mask.
4. Masks must always be worn over both the nose and the mouth.
5. Do not remove your face mask to speak.

Violation of the masking policy will be handled on an individual basis and violations will fall under Chapter 71, Section 37H, 37H $\frac{1}{2}$, and 37H $\frac{3}{4}$, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Individuals may be excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons, per CDC guidance:

The individual:

- has trouble breathing
- is unconscious
- in incapacitated
- cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance

Additionally, face masks are not required while eating or drinking.

Exceptions to this policy will be made on an individual basis and only in the case of specific medical conditions, as outlined by a doctor's note specifying diagnosis and the specific symptoms that preclude mask use. The District may ask for further clarification from the medical professional identified, if needed, to understand their decision process. In addition, any exemption must be approved by the Superintendent or Designee. Admission without a mask will not be allowed until this documentation is received, reviewed, and accepted by the Superintendent or Designee.

Student face masks should be provided by the student's parent or guardian. The District will supply a disposable face mask to those individuals who arrive at a building or board school transportation without one, or if the provided face mask appears soiled or worn.

LEGAL REF.:

- Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, Special Meeting, August 24, 2021.
<https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2022/2021-08/>
- Implementation of DESE Mask Requirement, August 24, 2021
<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2021-0825maskrequirement.pdf>
- MGL Chapter 71, Sections Section 37H, 37H ½, and 37H ¾
 - <https://malegislature.gov/laws/generallaws/parti/titlexii/chapter71/section37h>
 - <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section37H1~2>
 - <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section37H3~4>

MASK REFS.:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Considerations for Wearing Masks: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/masking-science-sars->

[cov2.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavi
rus%2F2019-ncov%2Fmore%2Fmasking-science-sars-cov2.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/masking-science-sars-cov2.html)

- Reopening Guidelines - <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>

Student Attendance (File JH)

Subject to operative law and regulations, the Superintendent may suspend, modify, or adapt policies related to student attendance, including the link between grades and attendance when appropriate, chronic absence policies, and accommodations for students requiring special placements.

Visitors in Schools and Buildings (File KI)

All visitors must wear a face mask upon entering any school building.

This Interim Policy may be reviewed, in part or in full, at any time upon the request of the Superintendent or upon a majority vote of the School Committee. This policy will be reviewed in full by the School Committee no later than June 30, 2022.

Approved by School Committee: August 26, 2021