

OLD FORT LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Home of the Stockaders

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August 21, 2020

Re: Updated Mask Policy

Dear Parents,

First of all, let me apologize that the topic of masks has been one of the most difficult, frustrating and ever-changing of all the issues related to school reopening. We have tried to keep you updated as best we could throughout all of the changing mandates to the best of our understanding. Attached to this memo you will find the recent Director's Order from the Ohio Department of Health regarding the use of facial coverings in schools. The verbal announcement by Governor DeWine mandating the use of masks for students in grades K-12 came on August 4th with vague details. On August 13th, the written order came down, still causing some confusion as to the exact details of the order. This past week the ODH made a clarifying statement that the school wide use of face shields does not meet the criteria in the direct order. After further conversation with other area school leaders, a conference call with the governor and consultation with our district attorney, the information below outlines our current understanding and practices as they will be enforced regarding masks in school. Again, we will stay in compliance with the orders of governing authorities in order to keep our school doors open.

Q: Who has to wear masks?

A: Students in grades K-12.

Q: Can a face shield be worn in place of a mask?

A: No, not for long periods of time. Face shields may only be used during a 10 minute mask break where six feet of distancing can be maintained.

Q: Where does my child have to wear a mask?

A: On a school bus, in any indoor location, and outdoors when six feet of distancing cannot be maintained.

Q: Does my child need to wear a mask during recess and PE?

A: Yes. The new order only allows for an exemption during physical activity where six feet of distancing can be maintained. Six feet of distancing cannot be maintained during normal recess and PE activities. Mask rules for sporting events are different than those during the school day.

Q: What if my child has a medical condition that restricts breathing, etc.?

A: A child with a medical condition may be permitted to wear a face shield rather than a mask with the written permission of his/her medical physician.

Q: Is any kind of mask permissible (neck gaiter, cloth mask, surgical mask, bandana etc.)?

A: Any of these mask styles meet the Director's Order. All masks must be appropriate for school (no political propaganda, scary/inappropriate masks, etc.).

Q: What is a mask break?

A: A mask break may be taken when six feet of distancing can be maintained. Mask breaks are to last no longer than ten minutes. If outdoors with six feet of distancing, masks may be pulled down. If indoors with six feet of distancing, students may switch to face shields for a ten minute mask break roughly once an hour/class period.

Q: If my child is six feet away from others, can he/she take their mask off?

A: No. The new mask order calls for masks to be worn in all public places. The idea that masks only need to be worn when within six feet of others is obsolete.

Q: What do I do now if I want my child to become part of the Stockader Academy, the online option?

A: You need to email your building administrator by Monday, August 24th to enroll.
ksmith@oldfortschools.org (Elementary) ecobb@oldfortschools.org (Middle/High School)

Again, I apologize that the mask policy keeps changing. The confusion around the information coming from Columbus has been extremely frustrating to everyone. However, our goal is to remain open for in-person instruction so we will comply with the Director's Order. If you have further questions, please email me or your building principal. Thank you.

With Children at Heart,

Laura F. Bryant, Superintendent

lbryant@oldfortschools.org



DIRECTOR'S ORDER

Re: Director's Order Requiring the Use of Facial Coverings in Child Education Settings

I, Lance D. Himes, Interim Director of the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), pursuant to the authority granted to me in R.C. 3701.13 to "make special orders...for preventing the spread of contagious or infectious diseases" **Order** the following to prevent the spread of COVID-19 into the State of Ohio:

1. **Facial Coverings (Masks).** Except as provided herein, all students, faculty, and staff in any child care setting, school building, or other location that provides care or education to any child in kindergarten through grade twelve in the State of Ohio shall wear facial coverings at all times when:
 - a. In any indoor location including, but not limited to, classrooms, gymnasiums, offices, locker rooms, hallways, cafeteria, and/or locker bays;
 - b. Outdoors on school property and unable to consistently maintain a distance of six feet or more from individuals who are not members of their household;
 - c. Waiting for a school bus outdoors and unable to maintain a distance of six feet or more from individuals who are not members of their household; or
 - d. Riding a school bus.

For purposes of this Order, a facial covering (mask) is any material that covers an individual's nose, mouth and chin.

2. **Exemptions.** The requirement to wear a facial covering does not apply when:
 - a. The individual has a medical condition including respiratory conditions that restricts breathing, mental health conditions, or a disability that contraindicates the wearing of a facial covering; or
 - b. The individual is communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing impaired or has another disability, where an accommodation is appropriate or necessary;
 - c. The individual is actively participating in outdoor recess and/or physical activity where students are able to maintain a distance of six feet or more or athletic practice, scrimmage, or competition that is permitted under a separate Department of Health Order;
 - d. The individual is seated and actively consuming food or beverage;
 - e. Where students and staff can maintain distancing of at least six feet and removal of the facial covering is necessary for instructional purposes, including instruction in foreign language, English language for non-native speakers, and other subjects where wearing a

facial covering would prohibit participation in normal classroom activities, such as playing an instrument;

- f. Students are able to maintain a distance of six feet or more and a mask break is deemed necessary by the educator supervising the educational setting;
 - g. The individual is alone in an enclosed space, such as an office; or
 - h. When an established sincerely held religious requirement exists that does not permit a facial covering.
3. **Duration:** This Order shall be effective at 12:01 a.m. on August 14, 2020 and remains in full force and effect until the State of Emergency declared by the Governor no longer exists or the Director of the Ohio Department of Health rescinds or modifies this Order, whichever occurs sooner.
4. **Conflicting Orders:** The requirements of this Order are controlling and effective over any conflicting provisions of the "Director's Order for Facial Coverings throughout the State of Ohio", issued on July 23, 2020.

Accordingly, I hereby **ORDER** that all persons wear facial coverings subject to the circumstances and requirements of this Order. This Director's Order shall remain in full force and effect until the State of Emergency declared by the Governor no longer exists, or the Director of the Ohio Department of Health rescinds or modifies this Order. To the extent any public official enforcing this Director's Order has questions regarding the effect of this Order, the Director of Health hereby delegates to local health departments the authority to answer questions in writing and consistent with this Order.



Vance D. Himes
Interim Director of Health

August 13, 2020
