

FAQs About Wearing Masks at School

Q: Why does my child have to wear a mask on the way to school and at school?

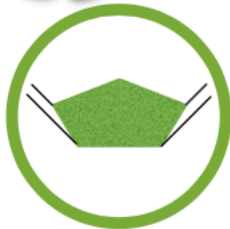
A: Masks help stop the spread of COVID-19 by blocking respiratory droplets from getting into the air and spreading to other people. Respiratory droplets are the tiny water droplets that come out of our mouths and noses when we breathe, talk, sing, cough and sneeze. They can contain the virus and are one of the ways that COVID-19 spreads. Children and adults in school are protecting each other from COVID transmission by wearing masks. If you have concerns about whether your child will be able to wear a mask, contact your school. They may be able to help.



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Q: Is there anyone who shouldn't wear a mask?

A: The vast majority of kids over age 2 can wear masks without a problem, including children with asthma. Some children with autism or anxiety may need extra help to get used to wearing a mask. Masks should NOT be put on babies, children younger than 2, or children who cannot remove the mask themselves because of the danger of suffocation. Contact your pediatrician if you have questions about your child's specific situation. If a child is having trouble breathing while at school, they should ask an adult for help.



Safe to wear a mask:

- ✓ Asthma
- ✓ Intellectual disability
- ✓ Mental health disorder
- ✓ Communication barriers
- ✓ Autism/sensory processing disorder



Not safe to wear a mask:

- X Asleep
- X Mask is a strangulation or choking risk
- X Child cannot remove the mask on their own

Q: Is it safe for my child to wear a mask all day?

A: Wearing a clean mask is very safe. Health care workers have been wearing them all day for many years without any harmful effects.



Q: How can I help my child wear a mask?

A:

- Be a great role model: wear your mask when you are out with your child!
- Help children understand that we are protecting others, like grandma and grandpa, when we wear masks.
- Make or decorate masks together with your child.
- Provide a mask with your child's favorite book or TV character on it.
- Practice! Start with short periods of mask wearing at home. Reward your child when they keep the mask on. Work up to longer periods of mask-wearing.

It's important to have several masks for your child to wear so that you can wash them daily.

Q: What kind of mask is most effective?

A: The mask should fit closely to the face. It must cover the mouth and nose and ideally should be a tightly woven fabric. Multiple layers may be most protective. Gaiters and bandannas may not be as effective and some schools are not allowing their use. Transparent masks may be useful for some adults who work with youth with hearing or communication impairments.



Q: Will schools allow children to take off their masks?

A: Schools will allow brief mask breaks throughout the day when children are spaced apart or outside.