## Face Coverings/Masks: Comparison of Various Guidance

### State of Iowa DE/IDPH — Reopening & Reopening FAQs

**6/25/20 Guidance:** Requiring face coverings for all staff and students is not recommended. Allow the personal use of cloth face coverings by staff and students.

**Rationale from FAQ:** Considerable health and safety, legal and training implications. Some individuals might not be able to use due to health or safety concern such as developmental disability, underlying condition, or mental health concern.

The FAQ provides local considerations for districts who wish to create a policy requiring face coverings, including type, sanitary measures, use and storage during lunch/snacks, training, enforcement, implications for those with health concerns, with medical conditions, considerations of other laws and directives, and others.

**IDPH General Reopening:** Members of the public and employees should consider the use of cloth face coverings (when practical) if staying at least 6 feet away from others is not possible.

Evidence continues to mount on the importance of universal face coverings in interrupting the spread of SARS-CoV-2. Although ideal, universal face covering use is not always possible in the school setting for many reasons. Some students, or staff, may be unable to safely wear a cloth face covering because of certain medical conditions (e.g., developmental, respiratory, tactile aversion, or other conditions) or may be uncomfortable, making the consistent use of cloth face coverings throughout the day challenging. For individuals who have difficulty with wearing a cloth face covering and it is not medically contraindicated to wear a face covering, behavior techniques and social skills stories (see resource section) can be used to assist in adapting to wearing a face covering.

When developing policy regarding the use of cloth face coverings by students or school staff, school districts and health advisors should consider whether the use of cloth face coverings is developmentally appropriate and feasible and whether the policy can be instituted safely. If not developmentally feasible, which may be the case for younger students, and cannot be done safely (for example, the face covering makes wearers touch their face more than they otherwise would), schools may choose to not require their use when physical distancing measures can be effectively implemented.

### American Academy of Pediatrics

Teach and reinforce use of cloth face coverings. Face coverings may be challenging for students (especially younger students) to wear in all-day settings such as school. Face coverings should be worn by staff and students (particularly older students) as feasible and are most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult. Individuals should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently. Information should be provided to staff, students, and students’ families on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.

**Note:** Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:

- Children younger than 2 years old;
- Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious; and
- Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.

Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment.

### Centers for Disease Control — Considerations for Schools

Identify where and how workers might be exposed to COVID-19 at work. Employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace. Conduct a thorough hazard assessment of the workplace to identify potential workplace hazards related to COVID-19. Use appropriate combinations of controls from the hierarchy of controls to limit the spread of COVID-19, including engineering controls, workplace administrative policies, and personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect workers from the identified hazards:

Conduct a thorough hazard assessment to determine if workplace hazards are present, or are likely to be present, and determine what type of controls or PPE are needed for specific job duties.

When engineering and administrative controls cannot be implemented or are not fully protective, employers are required by OSHA standards to:

- Determine what PPE is needed for their workers’ specific job duties;
- Select and provide appropriate PPE to the workers at no cost; and
- Train their workers on its correct use.

Encourage workers to wear a cloth face covering at work if the hazard assessment has determined that they do not require PPE, such as a respirator or medical mask for protection.

### Centers for Disease Control — Considerations for Employers

Personal protective equipment is defined as gloves, gown, face mask and/or face shield, goggles.

Each employer should select the combination of PPE that protects workers specific to their workplace. PPE will vary by work task, the results of the employer’s hazard assessment, and the types of exposure workers have on the job.

Consider offering face masks to ill employees and customers to contain respiratory secretions until they are able to leave the workplace (for example, for medical evaluation/care or to return home). In the event of a shortage of masks, a reusable face shield that can be decontaminated may be an acceptable method of protecting against droplet transmission.

### OSHA Workplace Guidance — Medium Exposure Risk Employers

Require all staff and students to wear masks of sufficient quality throughout the school day, except during meals. Schools must supply masks made of at least two-ply cotton to staff who are not carrying out disinfection procedures—which require greater protection—and students, in accordance with CDC recommendations.

Ensure that staff involved in preparing and serving meals and custodial staff are supplied with and wear appropriate protective gear, including N95 masks and gloves; this includes staff involved in student transport and cleaning vehicles used for student and/or staff transport.

### Iowa State Education Association — NEA “All Hands on Deck” Reopening School Buildings

Require all staff and students to wear masks of sufficient quality throughout the school day, except during meals. Schools must supply masks made of at least two-ply cotton to staff who are not carrying out disinfection procedures—which require greater protection—and students, in accordance with CDC recommendations.

Ensure that staff involved in preparing and serving meals and custodial staff are supplied with and wear appropriate protective gear, including N95 masks and gloves; this includes staff involved in student transport and cleaning vehicles used for student and/or staff transport.

Summary compiled by the Iowa Association of School Boards, July 2020