

Rules and Procedures Regarding Face Coverings in Onslow County Schools

As directed by the Board of Education during the September 7, 2021, meeting, Onslow County Schools is adopting the following rules and procedures applicable to all students, employees, and visitors. These rules and procedures govern all school activities and functions, including school-sponsored activities and events, including off-campus events. These rules and procedures go into effect on September 9, 2021, with full implementation on September 13, 2021.

I. Students

A. Requirement to Wear Face Coverings

Until further notice, all Onslow County Schools students must wear face coverings (a) while attending school or a school function while inside a school building, (b) while participating in an indoor off-campus school-sponsored event, and/or (c) when riding on school buses or other school transportation vehicles. All face coverings must cover the nose and mouth of the student. Students must wear face coverings at all times except for the following:

1. The student is actively eating or drinking;
2. The student is participating in a designated mask break;
3. A band/orchestra student actively playing a brass or woodwind instrument indoors;
4. The student has difficulty breathing or otherwise cannot tolerate a face covering due to a developmental, medical, or behavioral health need as evidenced by documentation from a healthcare provider;
5. The student is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Documentation from a healthcare provider necessary to establish an exemption under Section (I)(A)(4) must specifically state that the student is not able to wear a face covering. The healthcare provider is not required to detail the diagnosis or condition that requires a face covering exemption.

While not required, face coverings are strongly recommended for students while engaging in activities outdoors as contact tracing and quarantine rules apply when students are outdoors.

B. Consequences for Violating the Face Covering Requirement

Students who do not meet the requirements of section (I)(A)(4) of these rules and procedures and who refuse to wear or frequently remove their face coverings (i.e. full removal from the face, uncovering their nose, or uncovering their mouths) in violation of this policy shall receive consequences as follows:

1. First offense - The student shall receive counseling on the importance of wearing a face covering.
2. Second offense - The teacher or principal should conduct a conference with the parent or guardian.
3. Third offense and subsequent offenses - The student will receive a disciplinary consequence in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct.

Principals have discretion to impose a higher level consequence for an earlier offense based on the severity of the incident and the age of the student. A disciplinary consequence will not be imposed on students who forget to bring a face covering to school or cannot afford a face covering provided that the student complies with the policy after being supplied with an appropriate face covering by school staff.

II. Visitors

A. Requirement to Wear Face Coverings

Until further notice, all visitors, except for children under the age of 2, must wear face coverings (a) while present indoors in any school building and/or (b) while participating in an indoor off-campus school-sponsored event. All face coverings must cover the nose and mouth of the visitor.

B. Consequences for Violating the Requirement

Visitors who violate this requirement shall not be permitted to remain inside the school building.

III. Employees

A. Requirement to Wear Face Coverings

Until further notice, all employees must wear face coverings (a) while working or attending a school function inside a school building, (b) while participating in an indoor off-campus school-sponsored event, and/or (c) when operating or riding in a school bus or other school transportation vehicle. All face coverings must cover the nose and mouth of the employee.

Employees must wear face coverings at all times except for the following:

1. The employee is working in a classroom, office, or other enclosed space and no other person is present;
2. The employee is actively eating or drinking;
3. The employee is participating in a designated mask break;
4. The employee is engaged in strenuous physical activity and able to maintain 6 feet of distance from other people;
5. The employee has a documented medical condition, has submitted a Request for Reasonable Accommodation form with their immediate supervisor, and the supervisor has approved the request; or
6. The employee is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Employees requesting an exemption pursuant to Section III(A)(5) must submit documentation that includes information from a healthcare provider that specifically states that the employee has a physiological condition that does not allow them to safely

wear a face covering. The healthcare provider shall detail the diagnosis or condition that requires a face covering exemption.

B. Consequences for Violating the Requirement

Employees who violate this requirement may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

IV. Scheduled Breaks from Wearing Face Coverings

School administrators and teachers have the discretion to designate brief mask break periods throughout the school day. Students and staff should maintain appropriate physical distance during mask break periods.

V. Interscholastic and Intramural Athletics

A. Interscholastic and intramural athletics refers to all middle school sports teams, high school junior varsity and varsity sports teams, and any club team sports.

B. Transportation to Away Games

1. All student athletes, coaches, athletic trainers, managers, and any other associated individuals must wear a face covering over their nose and mouth at all times when riding on an activity bus or other school transportation to an away game or other team event.

C. Indoor Sports

1. During any period when not actively participating in practice or a game or match (e.g. seated on the bench), student athletes are required to wear a face covering over their nose and mouth.
2. Face coverings are strongly encouraged but not required when student athletes are physically active at practice or during competition.
3. Coaches, athletic trainers, team managers, and any other associated individuals are required to wear face coverings at practices and during competition.

D. Spectators

1. Unless actively eating or drinking, all spectators are required to wear masks during indoor sports competitions. Spectators who violate this rule will be asked to leave the event. Spectators are not permitted to attend indoor sports practices.
2. All spectators are strongly encouraged but not required to wear face coverings and/or to maintain a social distance of at least six feet from non-family members during outdoor sports competitions.