

Cloth Face Covering and Social Distancing Guidelines

1. **All staff should wear a cloth face covering at all times in the classroom and while on the job, with an allowance for short breaks** (even within a well spaced out classroom under certain conditions) **or in private offices or when alone in a building.** These break opportunities occur only if staff members can remain at least 6 feet away from others. The mask can be pulled down or removed briefly. Staff members should touch the mask on the ear loops with clean hands or replace the mask with a clean one. **Clean hands with soap/ water or use hand sanitizer before and after mask removal.** We have a CDC handout on how to use a mask.
2. Teaching staff may also take **longer mask breaks while outside**, where it is easier to physically distance, remaining mindful that a mask must go right back on or be placed correctly over the nose and mouth when closer than six feet to children or adults. Hand sanitizer should be used after touching the mask while outside, and staff may keep their own small bottles in their pocket, being mindful that it must be safeguarded away from children..
3. All staff who are working alone in their classrooms or offices may take off their masks; however, they must be available, along with hand sanitizer to utilize quickly. **Visitors to other classrooms or offices should stay back and make certain that their coworker is masked.** Consider calling, FaceTiming or zooming instead of visiting other spaces. Staff may designate their work space as NOT available for outsiders-post a sign or share the no guest status via email.
4. When children are not present, it is easier to fall into old patterns of socialization. On work days, during Zoom Calls, and during breaks to include lunch time, staff members should take great care to **physically distance** . There is **no real magic to six feet**. During meal times and when people cough or sneeze without a mask, germs are moving rapidly many feet in the air. There are some dramatic depictions of just how far covid may travel. We may not enjoy fun break times in the congregate area, and it is best to enjoy lunch outside, at your desk, or even in your car - unless extreme social distancing can be maintained. Try facetime with a friend during breaks and do lunch together in a new way! **If you elect to eat at your desk, make sure your coworkers know you are on lunch and are not available to do work.**
5. **Keep your mask on in the restroom** and if you must ride together in a bus or vehicle. If you use an agency vehicle, wipe down the high touch areas before and after use and try to use the same vehicle to the extent possible. Staff alone in their own vehicle will not need to use a mask, unless that is their preference to keep their vehicle ultra clean for others who may use it. Nutrition workers should use their masks while shopping on the job, following the same procedures noted above for some allowance when distant from others.
6. **Staff have received a supplement to cover the costs of masks.** Staff may use masks that have been donated to Head Start, but these should be offered to parents who should be encouraged to wear masks especially during child health checks. If staff use our single use masks due to temporary needs, please replenish our supply as they are readily available online and in local stores. The one time use masks are available as a courtesy for guests and as a reminder of the important attention we pay to the Center for Disease Control standards.
7. **Feel free to remind others of the need to wear or adjust their masks.** This can help a coworker avoid oral warnings related to safety rule violations. After a friendly reminder and oral warning, offenders may expect written warning and a very likely suspension without pay just as would occur with any other safety rule issue.

8. Although some neck gaiter masking systems are fine, they are not recommended as it is difficult to know if the material is adequate and "doubled" in the mouth and nose area. They are considered questionable and may be disallowed in the future.

Important issue to keep in mind...will you have to quarantine because a child or coworker develops covid? Mask or no mask, the distance is what counts when contact tracing takes place, but the mask would likely protect you from giving the disease to someone else! It is relatively easy to avoid close contact -10-15 minutes- with your coworkers-but harder with children. It is adults who are most dangerous and vulnerable. And perhaps 40 percent of our staff have conditions that might qualify them as vulnerable. Wear it correctly for them. Stay safer...wear and encourage mask use.

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