



South Park School District

September 4, 2021

The South Park School District is providing this update following the district receiving guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education at 4 p.m. on Friday, September 3, 2021.

Beginning on Tuesday, September 7, 2021, face coverings are required in all Pennsylvania K-12 schools by [order of the Secretary of Health](#). Following a legal review of the mandate issued on August 31, 2021, the South Park School District must and will comply with the face covering mandate, as it does the dozens of other mandates issued by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the federal government. The South Park School District, as a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, is required to comply with and enforce this order from an agency of the state. Our compliance with this mandate aligns with the district's health and safety plan shared in July and approved by the Board of Directors in August. Our plan said the district would comply with mandates issued by local, state, or federal governing/health authorities. Therefore, face coverings will be required indoors in South Park School District buildings before, during, and after the school day, until the order is rescinded.

The following are exceptions to the face covering requirements listed in the order. According to the order, "All alternatives to a face covering, including the use of a face shield, should be exhausted before an individual is exempted from this order."

- If wearing a face covering while working would create an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.
- If wearing a face covering would either cause a medical condition, or exacerbate an existing one, including respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition or a disability.
- When necessary to confirm the individual's identity.
- When working alone and isolated from interaction with other people with little or no expectation of in-person interaction.
- If an individual is communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired or has another disability, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- When the individual is under two (2) years of age.
- When an individual is:
 - › Engaged in an activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating and drinking, or playing an instrument that would be obstructed by the face covering; or
 - › Participating in high intensity aerobic or anerobic activities, including during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals.
 - › When a child/student is participating in a sports practice activity or event, whether indoors or outdoors.



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According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's guidance released the afternoon of September 3, exceptions are to be **"in accordance with eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or IDEA for such medical or mental health condition or disability. School entities should follow their established processes for determining student eligibility under those laws, including any medical documentation that they would normally require."** Therefore, if students or their families report that a child cannot wear a face covering in school for one of the exception reasons listed in [the order](#), medical documentation from a licensed physician must be provided to the child's building principal that specifically states the child's disability or medical condition and that it prevents the child from being able to wear a mask or shield.

While there are many opinions on the use of face coverings in schools, our shared goal is five-days of in-person instruction for our K-12 students. By being masked, the number of potential quarantines in the event of a positive COVID-19 case should be greatly reduced, and therefore will limit academic interruptions.

Individuals with questions or concerns about the order should [contact the Pennsylvania Department of Health](#), as it issued the face covering mandate.

Thank you for your careful attention and cooperation, and enjoy the rest of your holiday weekend.

