

GCPS Guidelines For Acceptable Face Coverings for Students and Staff

COVID-19 is mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. You are wearing the mask to protect other people from your respiratory droplets and they are doing the same for you, this is known as source control.

- **Masks must be made of two or more layers of fabric.**
- **Masks held on with ear loops are recommended over ties.**
- **Masks must be worn so they cover your nose and mouth.**
- **Masks must fit under your chin and fit snugly against your face.**
- **Face shields are not a substitute for a cloth face covering.**
- **Bandanas are not to be worn as a face covering.**
- **Masks with exhalation valves or vents are not to be used.**
- **Although not recommended as the best option, gaiters with two layers of material may be worn at this time. This could change based on recommendations from the CDC or GCHD.**



CDC, 2020

If needed, a free face covering can be provided that meets the GCPS guidelines.

Documentation from a healthcare provider must be submitted if special face covering accommodations are needed.

If the face covering worn by a student is deemed to be unsafe by the school's health professional, a mask will be provided.

Please note that guidance can change at any time based on current research, current metrics, and guidance from the GCHD, MDH and CDC.

Questions & Answers

- ★ **Why are ear loops encouraged?**
 - Ear loops provide ease of putting on the mask and removing the mask. Masks with ties can slip and are difficult for younger children to tie.
- ★ **Can I use plastic or crochet devices to keep the loops from hurting my ears?**
 - Yes, as long as they keep the mask in place and they do not allow it to gap open.
- ★ **Can I wear the mask just over my mouth and not my nose?**
 - No, every time a person exhales through their nose, they are likely generating a higher concentration of infectious aerosol than if they were simply breathing from their mouth. *(CDC, 9/2020)*
- ★ **Can masks cause carbon dioxide (CO²) build-up?**
 - Some people have suggested that carbon dioxide from exhaling gets trapped under the cloth and can make you sick. This isn't true. Properly fitted masks offer adequate airflow while still covering your nose and mouth. This makes the accumulation of carbon dioxide impossible. *(University of Maryland Health Care 9/2020)*
- ★ **What is the controversy over gaiters?**
 - A limited study of droplet disbursement performed at Duke University found that single-layer gaiter and bandanas performed poorer than the mask options and increased droplet counts by splitting the droplets. Many other studies are being done and at this time the CDC cautions that their effectiveness is unknown.
- ★ **Why are some people wearing specialized face coverings?**
 - You may see some people wearing specialized face coverings in order to meet specific individual needs of students or to perform essential functions of their job safely. One example would be a mask with a clear plastic area over the mouth so you can read the lips of the person wearing the mask.
- ★ **What is meant by a bandana?**
 - A bandana is a square piece of fabric that is folded to make a triangle and tied around the neck or head. Used as a face covering they tend to slip and cause the wearer to frequently touch their head and face to make adjustments.