

# Masking in Schools

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads mainly by respiratory droplets. People let these droplets into the air when they talk, cough, or sneeze. Many people with COVID-19 have no symptoms. People with no symptoms can still give the virus to others, especially if they spend a long period of time close to other people. People can also give the disease to others before they show symptoms of COVID-19.

**Face coverings, often called masks, can help stop a person's germs from spreading to others. Research has shown that wearing masks lowers the risk of infection, especially when people also are careful to wash their hands often and stay at least 6 feet away from others.**

To help keep schools open, it is very important that students and staff do what they can to stop the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

---

## Everyone must wear a mask

Everyone who can wear a mask, should, including all students, staff, and other people present in school buildings and district offices, or riding in school buses, vans, or cars. Masks can include those made of paper that can be thrown away and those made of cloth, or a scarf, a bandana, or a religious face covering that covers both the mouth and nose.

---

## Tips for parents

- Before school starts, show and tell your child the right way to put on and take off a mask. Here are some ways to do this:
  - Put a mask on a favorite stuffed animal.
  - Consider giving your child face coverings that have pictures of things they like, such as cartoons or animals.
  - Show pictures of other children and students wearing masks.
  - Use books and videos to help talk about the importance of wearing masks around teachers and friends.
- Send your child to school with a clean mask every day.

---

## Masks and people with special health needs

Some people cannot wear masks. This may include:

- Students with medical or other health conditions or disabilities, or mental health, developmental, or behavioral needs that make it hard to wear a face covering.
- Any person who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, or sleeping, or who is unable to remove the face covering without help.

Face shields may work for some people who cannot wear masks for medical or other reasons. A face shield is made of clear plastic that covers from the forehead down to below the chin and wraps around the sides of the face. A face shield protects the person wearing it, and it makes it possible for others to see their face and lips. This can make it easier for others to understand them when they talk.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing may ask others to take off their masks while talking to each other, as long as everyone can stay at least 6 feet away from each other.



Minnesota Department of Health | [health.mn.gov](https://health.mn.gov) | 651-201-5000  
625 Robert Street North PO Box 64975, St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

Contact [health.communications@state.mn.us](mailto:health.communications@state.mn.us) to request an alternate format.

08/28/2020