

North Providence School Department FACE COVERING POLICY-COVID-19	Approved: 10/28/2020

I. PURPOSE

The COVID 19 Pandemic may require extraordinary action or protocols to keep the school community safe and facilitate orderly education of our students.

The North Providence School Committee is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for students, staff, and their families.

Pursuant to RI General Laws 16-2-9, 16-2-9.1 and 16-2-18, the North Providence School Committee has the responsibility to address the health and wellness of students and employees and enforce applicable Federal and State laws, Executive Orders, rules and regulations, best practices and guidelines set forth from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), the Rhode Island Board of Education and Council on Elementary and Secondary Education and RI Department of Health (RIDOH) for face coverings.

II. FACE COVERINGS IN NORTH PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Face coverings are recommended to be worn by all staff, students, and other individuals during all indoor activities while on school premises and/or attending school events or functions or incidental or related activities in accordance with universal indoor masking protocol developed by the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) as amended from time to time. All face coverings will follow the RIDOH and CDC guidance.

III. FACE MASK BREAKS

Face covering breaks may occur throughout the day, in accordance with District protocol and universal indoor masking protocol developed by the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) as amended from time to time and as determined by the principal and where appropriate social distancing can be maintained.

IV. SUPPORTIVE AND COMPLIANCE EFFORTS

Designated district personnel shall work with all students to build tolerance for wearing face coverings, as needed.

V. EXCEPTIONS TO FACE MASK REQUIREMENTS

When a staff member or student is either alone in a room/office or alone with parents or guardians, they may remove their face covering.

Face coverings should not be placed on children younger than age two.

No one within the developmentally delayed population will be forced to wear a face covering.

In carrying out this policy, the administration shall apply, as appropriate, rules, regulations and requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 794), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 USC 12131-12134) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 USC 1400, et seq) all as amended from time to time as well as any other applicable laws, rules and regulations.

VI. EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES

The School Committee recognizes that that the continued prevalence of COVID-19 and all its variants creates a dynamic, emergent situation resulting in the potential change in public health and safety recommendations and orders from the CDC, the Rhode Island Department of Health, and the Governor of the State of Rhode Island or in the District's approach to health and safety measures.

In the event any mandatory order is issued in this regard, or in the event of an unanticipated change in circumstances in which the Superintendent determines it is necessary to immediately alter the District's response and notwithstanding this policy, the Superintendent is directed to forthwith amend the District's response to COVID -19 pandemic and to conform with all such orders.

VII. DEVELOPMENT OF PROTOCOL

The Superintendent of Schools shall develop a protocol to facilitate this policy.

This protocol should include: (1) staff and family and student engagement; (2) public facing efforts to educate students, families, staff and other third parties around the need to wearing face coverings; (3) remedial and compliance efforts such as meetings with school staff and the students' families; (4) institution of mandatory distance learning when, in the Superintendent's discretion, imposition of distance learning is appropriate or required, (5) appropriate disciplinary actions (if necessary) and (6) other actions to support the staff, student and the family to ensure compliance with this policy.

Approved: 10/28/2020

Amended: 11/18/2020

Amended: 8/25/2021

Amended: 2/16/2022 - Effective: 3/4/2022