

Dear Okemos Public Schools Students and Families,

As we approach our Safe Return to School, it is imperative that students and families understand and follow all of the established safety procedures listed in our updated handbooks. We are asking each family to sit down with their students prior to their return and to review the entire [K-12 Handbook Supplement for COVID 19](#) which establishes clear guidelines and understanding between the school, students, staff and our families. To help make this information more accessible for our community, the following highlighted topics are covered in the email below:

Safe Return to School Email Communications Schedule

Topic	Date
Health & Daily Screening Expectations Illness Protocols Communications (Close Contacts, Positive Cases)	Thursday, February 25
Facial Coverings Hallway and Restroom Expectations Lockers and Backpacks	Friday, February 26
Transportation Arrival and Dismissal Visitors and Volunteers	Monday, March 1

Please note: Transportation schedules including bus stop locations and pick up times will be included in Monday's email.

Facial Coverings (Masks and Face Shields)

Face Masks ([CDC Guidance](#)) ([Types of Masks - CDC](#)) ([CDC Masks](#))

- Mask expectations will follow the most recent and up-to-date recommendations as defined by the CDC guidance provided within the above link.
- Mask expectations include multi-layer coverings and a secure fit.
- A mask is a facial covering made of cloth material that covers the nose and mouth.
- Cloth face coverings are masks made from material that are meant to cover your nose and mouth and to be secured under the chin and are not considered personal protective equipment (PPE). These are effective in reducing the spread of the virus. Reusable face coverings should be cleaned daily.
- Facial coverings may be secured to the head or simply wrapped around the lower face. They can be made of a variety of materials, such as cotton or linen, and may be factory-made or made by hand and should NOT contain a valve.
- Facial coverings shall be disposed of daily, or cleaned at home on a daily basis.

Face Shields

- Face shields are not acceptable alternatives to mask wearing.
- The CDC does not recommend the use of face shields as a substitute for cloth face coverings. However, a face shield that covers the eyes, nose and mouth can be worn in addition to a cloth mask if desired. Moreover, a face shield may be worn by younger children who are not required to wear a cloth face mask.
- It is not known if face shields provide any benefit as source control to protect others from the spray of respiratory particles. CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for masks. Some people may choose to use a face shield (with a mask) when sustained close contact with other people is expected.

Mask Breaks

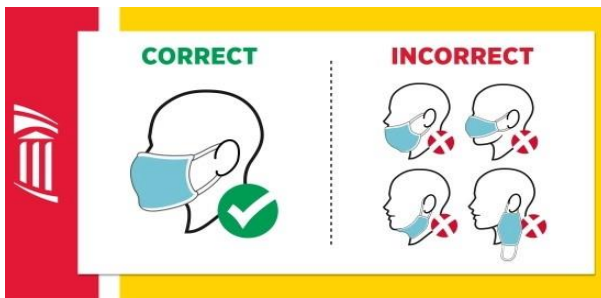
- Special circumstances may result in providing a mask-break to meet individual needs. Such situations will be coordinated by school staff and will provide the student with a safe, and socially distanced, location within the school.
- Should staff members determine that a student is not adhering to health and safety expectations, parents/guardians will be notified by teachers/staff members. Building administration will be notified and disciplinary action will occur in accordance with defined mask violation procedures.

Mask Exemptions

- Okemos Public Schools will require documentation from a licensed medical professional for any student unable to wear a mask. Families may NOT “opt-out” their child from the facial covering requirement.
- Families will need to contact the main office of their student’s building to request a [Mask Exemption Form](#). This form must be completed and signed by a physician, and returned to the main office of the student’s school in order for an exemption request to be considered for approval.

Mask Expectations

Appropriate masking of students and staff is required at school (bus stop, bus, school, on district grounds, during school activities). Expectations for appropriate mask-wearing include placing the mask over your nose and mouth, securing it under your chin, and ensuring that it fits snugly against the sides of your face as illustrated here:



Mask Violation Disciplinary Action

Okemos Public Schools will enforce compliance with district, state and local requirements for students and staff through our normal disciplinary and policy mechanisms. Mask-wearing violations will be documented through a behavior referral process.

A mask violation can be defined as behaviors such as, but not limited to:

- Insubordination
- Continuous refusal
- Defiance
- Non-compliance
- Ignored requests to make mask adjustments that comply with health and safety expectations

Mask Violation - 1st Offense

- Student will receive a verbal warning by building staff and/or administrator
- Parent/guardian communication by building administrator will occur
- Parent/guardian will receive written documentation (Notice of Mask Violation) of the offense from a school administrator

- Consequences following progressive discipline practices may be applied in response to the mask violation.

Mask Violation - 2nd Offense

- Administrator conference with student/parent/guardian
- Parent/guardian will receive written documentation (Notice of Mask Violation) of the offense of the offense from a school administrator
- Student will be placed in online learning for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.

Hallway and Restroom Behavior Expectations

This pertains to passing periods and time in hallways during and after the school day:

- The district cannot guarantee social distancing of students during passing periods; however, we will encourage students to do their best to maintain social distancing (six feet of personal space) during transition times.
- Students are expected to wear masks and maintain 6 feet social distance when using the bathroom.
- Students will abide by the hallway and door direction markers during passing periods.
- Students are expected to go directly to their next class/activity. Students will not be able to loiter in common areas (i.e. water filling stations, bathrooms, etc.).
- Students will use appropriate indoor voices.

Lockers and Backpacks

- Locker utilization will be determined at elementary schools depending on ability to meet safety guidelines. Students are permitted to bring backpacks.
- Kinawa, Chippewa and OHS will not be utilizing lockers. Students will be permitted to carry their backpacks.

If you should have questions after reviewing the supplement to our handbook, please reach out to your building administrator. Again, these guidelines are established to promote safety for all as we return to in person instruction. We appreciate the serious manner in which families and students will review this information so we can build a safe environment for all as we navigate our return to in person learning.

John J. Hood - Superintendent