

Masks in Elementary Schools

Q & A

Does my child in Kindergarten to Grade 3 have to wear a mask while at school?

No. Children in Kindergarten to Grade 3 are not mandated to wear a mask while at school. For this age group, mask wearing remains a personal or family choice. Please keep in mind, the Public Health Officer does encourage the wearing of masks by students in Kindergarten to Grade 3.

Does my child in Grade 4 and 5 have to wear a mask while at school?

Yes. All students in Grade 4 and 5 are required to wear a mask while indoors, at school. Students in Grade 4 and 5 are also required to wear a mask when riding the school bus.

What if I would like my child to be exempt from wearing a mask at school?

We need to remember that the wearing of masks has been mandated by the Public Health Officer, and we are expected to follow the mandate. Exceptions to wearing a mask while in the school, include:

EXCEPTIONS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VISITORS:

The guidance outlined above regarding mask requirements does not apply to staff, students and visitors in the following circumstances:

- to a person who cannot tolerate wearing a mask for health or behavioural reasons;
- to a person who is unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person;
- if the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the person wearing it;
- if the mask is removed temporarily to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (e.g. playing a wind instrument, engaging in high-intensity physical activity, etc.);
- if a person is eating or drinking;
- if a person is behind a barrier; or
- while providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability (including but not limited to a hearing impairment) where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movements is important.

What if my preference is for my child in Grade 4 or 5 to not wear a mask while inside at school?

Personal preference is not on the list of possible exceptions for wearing a mask. Consider seeking medical advice from your health care provider.

What do I do if I feel my child has a medical or behavioural reason that make it difficult to tolerate a mask?

If your child has a preexisting medical condition, the recommendation is to speak to your health care provider about your child's level of risk. Once you have had a conversation with the principal or vice-principal and if it's been determined that your child is unable to wear a mask, in consultation with parents and the teacher, a plan will be developed to respect the Health & Safety of the students in the class and the teacher, while respecting the student unable to wear a mask.

Examples may include:

- the student who is unable to wear a mask will be physically distanced (2m) from other students;
- if physical distancing of 2m is not possible, a transparent plexi-glass barrier will be placed in between the student and the children or adults he/she is working with.

Do students have to wear masks during indoor Physical Education classes or indoor sporting events?

If students are participating in low-intensity activities (eg. gymnastics, hula-hooping, passing an object back and forth), they will continue to wear a mask. If students are participating in high-intensity activities (eg. fitness stations, basketball/floor hockey game, indoor soccer), they do not have to wear a mask.

Will teachers provide “mask-free” breaks?

Yes. Teachers will do their best to provide outdoor breaks or outdoor learning opportunities, throughout the day, allowing students to remove their masks and enjoy the fresh air. Students are not required to wear masks during Recess, Lunch or outdoor education/PE classes.