



April 7, 2021

Re: Provincial Health Orders of March 30, 2021 – Updated Mask Guidelines

Updated guidelines on mask wearing in our schools are available on the [BCCDC website](#). This document is intended to help parents/caregivers, staff and visitors understand what these new guidelines mean for you. The Ministry of Education, Provincial Health Office, and BC Centre for Disease Control have provided school districts with amendments to the K – 12 health and safety guidelines which are found in these two documents:

[BCCDC Public Health Guidance for K – 12 Schools](#)
[Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K – 12 Settings](#)

Here's What You Need to Know:

Effective March 30, 2021 all K – 12 staff and students in grades 4 – 12, and visitors to schools will be required to wear non-medical masks in all indoor areas, including when they are at their workstations (desks), and on school buses. This is in effect both within and outside of their learning group.

Exceptions Include:

- A person who is unable to wear a mask because they do not tolerate it (for health or behavioural reasons)
- A person 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. actively playing a wind instrument, high-intensity physical activity etc.)
- If a person is eating or drinking
- If a person is behind a barrier
- 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 are important



Students in Kindergarten to grade 3 are strongly encouraged to wear a mask indoors in schools and on school buses – both within and outside of their learning group. Mask wearing for these students ultimately remains a personal or family/caregiver choice, and these choices must be respected.

Students will be able to remove their masks while outside, including at recess, lunchtime and while learning outside.

Actions:

- Please send your child to school with a clean mask each day.
- If your child forgets their mask, the school can provide a mask for your child.
- Resources:
 - Health Canada, How to Wear A Mask [video](#)
 - BCCDC How to Wear A Mask [poster](#)

Moving Forward:

Our administrators, teachers and school-based staff are available to help students get comfortable with these new guidelines. The district will continue to work with the Ministry of Education and public health and will provide the community with updates to health and safety changes as they become available.

As we all continue to adapt to this ever-changing landscape, we appreciate everyone's efforts to work together to help keep their community safe. Thank you for your ongoing patience and support as we navigate COVID-19's impact on our schools and communities.