

# Villa Esperanza Services

## FACE COVERINGS GUIDELINES For Limited In-Person Instruction April 2021

*(CDPH Guidelines = COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework  
& Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021)*

Face coverings must be used in accordance with CDPH guidelines unless a person is exempt as explained in the guidelines.

The face covering guidance applies to all settings, including schools. The guidance discusses the circumstances in which face coverings must be worn and the exemptions, as well as any policies, work rules, and practices employers have adopted to ensure the use of face coverings.

Face covering policies apply on school buses and any vehicle affiliated with the school used to transport students, staff, or teachers to and/or from a school site.

Schools should teach and reinforce use of face coverings, or in limited instances, face shields with drapes when appropriate.

Students in all grade levels K-12 are required to wear face coverings at all times, while at school, unless exempted. A cloth face covering or face shield should be removed for meals, snacks, naptime, or when it needs to be replaced. When a cloth face covering is temporarily removed, it should be placed in a clean, safe area, clearly marked with the student's name and date, until it needs to be put on again.

The face covering guidance recognizes that there are some students who cannot wear a face covering for a number of different reasons. Students are exempted from the requirement if they are (1) under age 2, (2) have a medical or mental health condition or disability that would impede them from properly wearing or handling a face covering, (3) those with a communication disability, (4) or when it would inhibit communication with a person who is hearing impaired. Those with communication disabilities or caregivers of those with communication disabilities can consider wearing a clear mask or cloth mask with a clear panel when appropriate.

Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition, as confirmed by school health team and therapists, must wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, as long as their condition permits it.

In order to comply with this guidance, schools must exclude students from campus if they are not exempt from wearing a face covering under CDPH guidelines and refuse to wear one provided by the school.

The school must provide and ensure staff use face coverings and all other required personal protective equipment in accordance with CDPH guidelines.

Face shields are an acceptable alternative when a student has a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a mask or face covering, or when people need to see the student's mouth and tongue motions in order to communicate.

Face coverings should be worn both indoors and outdoors, including during outdoor recess.

If a student removes a face covering, or demonstrates a need to remove the face covering for a short-period of time:

- Provide space away from peers while the face covering is removed. In the classroom setting, an example could be a designated chair where a student can sit and take a 15 minute "sensory break" or a location in the classroom where there is at least six feet of separation from other students.
- Designated area or chair must be appropriately distanced from other students and of a material that is easily wiped down for disinfection after each use.
- Provide additional instructional supports to effectively wear a face covering.
- Provide students adequate support to re-engage in safely wearing a face covering.

If any student requires an accommodation to meet the requirement for face coverings, schools should work to limit the student's proximity to other students and staff to the extent possible to minimize the possibility of exposure. Appropriate accommodations may include:

- Offering different types of face coverings and face shields that may meet the needs of a student.
- Space away from peers while the face covering is removed. Students should not be left alone or unsupervised.
- Short periods of the educational day that do not include wearing the face covering, while following the other health strategies to reduce spread.
- Additional instructional supports to effectively wear a face covering.

For students with existing medical conditions and a physician's order to not wear face coverings, or other health related concerns, schools must not deny access to limited in-person program.

No disability category universally prescribes whether a student will be able to wear a face covering. However, students eligible for certain disability categories are more likely to have difficulty wearing face coverings. These include: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Other Health Impairment, Emotional Behavior Disability, and Orthopedic Impairment.

Schools must consider the unique needs that arise from a student's disability in determining how to appropriately support their access to an appropriate education setting (FAPE).

In order to support students with disabilities to meet COVID-19 safety guidelines, the school may consider the following accommodations:

- Gradually build the length of time in which the student can tolerate wearing a mask
- Schedule mask "breaks" at times when students can be physically apart outside
- Offer students masks with different sizes, styles, and textures
- Offer clear face shields that meet safety guidelines
- Use of a Functional Behavior Assessment-driven support plan with a goal of tolerating a face covering
- Provide plastic shields or other physical barriers at the student's workstation until they can tolerate a face covering
- Teach, model and practice social distancing
- Use markers such as tape on floors to mark areas that students need to stay in
- Use objects such as hula hoops and pool noodles to show safe social distancing
- Use step by step instructions for hand washing
- Use timers to show the safe length of time for hand washing
- Use unscented soap or soap with a scent the student likes

If a student is still not able to meet COVID-19 safety guidelines, the student's support team should meet and talk about other services, accommodations or technology to encourage students to meet COVID-19 safety guidelines.

If the school is considering a change of placement that will better support the student's needs, or the student is moved to a fully remote placement, the school must involve the student's support team to discuss the proposed change in placement. Student must be placed in the least restrictive environment and written notice must be provided prior to a change in placement.

If a student is moved to a more restrictive placement, the student's team should have a strategy and plan to return the student to their original placement as soon as possible. This is true whether the student is moved to their own space within the building or moved out of the building completely.