

FACE COVERING/MASK POLICY (EMERGENCY OPERATIONS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC)

Regional School Unit 13 believes that the health and safety of or students, staff, and community members is of paramount importance. Therefore, the Board of Directors requires that all persons utilizing, or entering any our facilities, or our bus or van transportation, adhere to the following guidelines regarding the use of face coverings or masks, according to Maine Department of Education, Maine Center of Disease Control and the RSU 13 Health Protocols standards described below. Failure to do so will result in persons being denied entry to our facilities and van or bus transportation and/or the removal of persons from our facilities. This policy will remain in effect for the duration of the COVID-19 Pandemic, or until such time as the RSU 13 Board of Directors either suspends or rescinds this policy. The Board of Directors authorizes the Superintendent to make adjustments to the masking requirements in accordance with County transmission designations and Maine Center for Disease Control recommendations. In such instances, the Superintendent shall notify the Board and the public of such changes within three (3) business days.

Face Coverings

Face coverings for staff and students are required at all times (including buses) with the exception of eating with 6-foot distancing, outdoor recess when students are able to physically distance by 6 feet, and during brief “mask breaks” between class periods or transitions when students can be at least 6 feet apart. For staff only: If PreK-12 students are not present in the building, immediate area, or on transportation, vaccinated staff may remove their face covering. Staff will be required to wear a mask in staff gatherings indoors if 6-foot distancing cannot be maintained. The use of face coverings during athletic practices or events must follow the Maine Principals Association, Maine Center for Disease Control and Maine Department of Education guidance for those activities. Face coverings must cover your nose and mouth, and fit snugly against the sides of your face. Cloth face coverings must have multiple layers of cloth. Gaiters, bandannas and similar, one layer coverings are disallowed, as well as masks fitted with a valve.

Staff and students who require face coverings shall upon request be provided appropriate face coverings by Regional School Unit 13.

For additional information about face coverings, review U.S. CDC guidance on how to make cloth face coverings, wear and remove masks/face coverings, and wash cloth face coverings. (Updated 8/19/2020) Face shields may be an option for those students with documented medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear face coverings. Exceptions will be made for those for whom it is not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or health or safety factors. Face shields worn in place of a face covering must extend below the chin and back to the ears. (Updated 8/19/2020) Additional accommodations may be made for students with disabilities who need access to a service provider under special conditions and in an isolated environment.

Face shields may be an option for staff who cannot wear a face covering due to documented medical or other health reasons. Face shields worn in place of a face covering must extend below the chin and back to the ears. (Updated 8/19/2020)

Masks/face coverings and face shields if applicable should be provided by the student/family, but extra masks will be made available by the school for students who need them. Cloth masks should be washed daily. Disposable masks should be changed daily.

Additional safety precautions are required for school nurses and/or any staff supporting students in close proximity, when distance is not possible, or when students require physical assistance. These precautions will at a minimum include eye protection (e.g., face shield or goggles) and a mask/face covering. Appropriate PPE shall be provided to school nurses by Regional School Unit 13.

Violations of this Policy

Students who willfully disregard or refuse to wear proper face coverings in accordance with this policy shall be subject to progressive disciplinary action up to and including, suspension, extended suspension, or expulsion according to Policies JKD, Suspension of a Student, and JK-R Administrative Procedure for Expulsion of Students.

Staff who willfully disregard or refuse to wear proper face coverings will be subject to progressive discipline up to and including termination of employment according to the terms of The Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 2 E for Teaching staff and Article 4 A for Education Support Professionals.

Adopted as amended at Second Reading October 7, 2021