

Face Covering Guidelines

Effective November 20, 2020

On November 12th, Governor Mike Parson, the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) announced modifications to Missouri's K-12 school reopening and operating guidance.

Under the updated guidance, proper mask wearing may now prevent students and staff from being identified as close contacts in the K-12 school setting that have implemented a mask mandate. This means that if both individuals at school – the person diagnosed with COVID-19 and the person exposed to the positive case – have masks on and are wearing them correctly, the individual exposed does not need to quarantine. These looser restrictions DO NOT apply to student participants in athletic practices or games.

Exposed individuals should self-monitor for symptoms and stay home at the first sign of illness. They should also continue to wear a mask at all times to further reduce the likelihood of transmitting the virus. The person who tests positive for COVID-19 is still required to isolate at home.

Under this new guidance Tarkio R-I School District's goal is to keep students in school. For this reason, the **Tarkio R-I School District will require face coverings to be worn at all times by staff and students K-12. Face coverings may be temporarily removed during lunch, or when instructed by faculty or administration.** Understand, students are subject to quarantine in those times that masks are not being worn.

The Tarkio R-I Administration will abide by the following guidelines:

Face Covering Requirements

"Appropriate face coverings/masks" should:

- Fully cover the mouth, nose, and chin;
- Fit snugly against the side of the face so there are no gaps;
- Not create difficulty breathing while worn; and
- Be held secure through either a tie, elastic, or similar means to prevent slipping

Students and staff, unless an exception applies, will be required to wear an appropriate face covering/mask. All students, regardless of grade level, must wear masks while being transported on school buses or vans. Anyone entering a Tarkio School District facilities will be required to wear a mask.

CDC exceptions to the face covering requirement:

- Face coverings should not be worn by anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
- Eating and drinking - Face coverings will not be required while eating or drinking.
- Individuals who have received approval from administration and/or school nurse after discussing their request not to wear appropriate face coverings/masks due to a physical, mental, or developmental health condition, if wearing an appropriate face covering/mask would lead to a medical emergency or would introduce significant safety concerns. A physician's report is required to accompany such a request. In this exception, the administration may also discuss other possible accommodations for the student or staff member. Such discussion shall follow District policies and procedures under Section 504 and the ADA.

- Strenuous physical activities - A face covering will not be required for any person inside or outside of any school district facility while actively engaging in strenuous physical activity. During these times, social distancing will be maintained.
- Outdoor activities and recess – A face covering will not be required for students participating in outdoor activities as long as social distancing is maintained.
- Miscellaneous – When participating in activities such as music, choir, band, theater and athletics where the wearing of face coverings is not practical, students will not be required to wear face coverings during the activity, but must still follow any and all safety procedures in place for the particular activity. For such activities, alternate face covering options should be considered, as appropriate.
- Staff and School Personnel- Face coverings are not required when working alone in an enclosed, assigned work area.
- Students and staff who use the above exceptions are subject to quarantine in those times when masks are not being worn. Those who are close contacts with the exceptions will be subject to quarantine.

Enforcement:

Employees: All employees are expected to comply with the face covering requirements above for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues, their students and others. Employees who do not comply will be reminded of the policy. If they refuse to comply after being reminded, the employee may be disciplined according to School Board Policies, including but not limited to insubordination.

Students: All students are expected to follow face covering requirements while in school or school-sponsored activities/events for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues, school staff, and others. Students who do not comply: 1) Will be reminded of the policy. 2) Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified of their non-compliance. 3) If a student refuses to comply, they will be sent home and will be required to receive their educational instruction via a virtual option.

Transportation: All students and staff utilizing district provided transportation must comply with mask mandate on morning and afternoon bus routes, school activities and functions, and vo-tech. Noncompliance may lead to forfeiting district provided transportation and participation in school activities and functions.

Members of the public and visitors will be politely reminded that face coverings are required while at or inside a district school/facility. A visitor will not be admitted to a district school/facility without a face covering.

The Tarkio School District will actively work with the Atchison County Health Department to continually assess the effectiveness of these looser restrictions. Documented transmission in the school setting may cause the need to tighten quarantine restrictions again. Please remember these looser restrictions are to help prevent students from being out of school in quarantine, but will not eliminate it altogether.