



Use of Non-Medical Masks or Face Coverings in Schools

[Non-medical masks or face coverings](#) are recommended as a protective barrier to help prevent droplets from landing on surfaces or other people when the person wearing the mask coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice.

A non-medical mask or face covering is a mask, balaclava, bandana, scarf, gaiter, cloth or other similar item that covers the nose, mouth and chin without leaving a gap between the face and the mask.

Wearing a non-medical mask or face covering is not a substitute for hand washing, physical distancing and staying home when ill.

How to properly wear a mask or face covering



Putting on your mask or face covering:

1. Before putting on your mask, clean your hands using warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 per cent alcohol.
2. Put on the mask touching only the straps.
3. Ensure it fits snugly around your nose, mouth and chin, without space at the sides.
4. Avoid touching your mask while wearing it to avoid contaminating your hands. If you do touch your mask, clean your hands.

Note: teachers and school staff can help students put on and adjust their mask as needed, provided that they clean their hands before and after doing so.

Removing your mask or face covering:

1. Before removing your mask, wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 per cent alcohol.
2. Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops, touching only the ties or ear loops.
3. Avoid touching the front of the mask when removing it. Be careful to not touch your eyes, nose or mouth when removing your mask.
4. Fold the outside corners of the mask together.
5. If reusable, store it in a clean place (for example, a sealed bag) and wash after every day of use, or if visibly soiled.
6. A non-reusable mask should be discarded in a plastic lined trash can when it is damp, soiled or crumpled.
7. Clean hands immediately after removing your mask.

How to care for your mask or face covering at school

- Clearly identify your mask with names or initials, to avoid confusion or accidentally using another person's mask.
- It can be helpful to label your mask to indicate top/bottom and front/back.
- Do not share or swap your mask, or touch a mask belonging to someone else.
- Your mask should be stored a clean place (for example, individually labeled container or sealed bag).
- A mask should not be worn if it is wet, damp or dirty.
- Cloth masks should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.
- Wash your cloth mask by putting it directly into the washing machine, using a hot cycle, and then dry thoroughly.
- Discard disposable masks in a plastic lined garbage bin after use.
- Families should consider providing an additional mask for children in case a back-up mask is needed during the day and to facilitate every day washing of a cloth mask.

Tips to support students' wearing masks or face coverings in schools

Getting used to wearing a mask can be challenging and may take a bit of practice. Here are some tips to help children and youth feel more comfortable wearing a mask:

- Parents and caregivers can practice wearing a mask with children and youth at home before the first day of school. Young children can practice putting a mask on a stuffed animal or doll.
- Parents and caregivers can include children and youth in the selection of their mask and/or the material that is used to make it. This may increase a child's acceptance of wearing the mask.
- Allow children and youth to choose a mask that is most comfortable to them, especially for individuals with sensory concerns/tactile sensitivities.

Resources:

Halton Region

- [Video: Masks](#)

Public Health Ontario

- [Fact Sheet: When and how to wear a mask](#)

Public Health Agency of Canada

- [Video: Wearing a non-medical mask or face covering properly](#)
- [Poster: How to safely use a non-medical mask or face covering](#)
- [Webpage: Non-medical masks and face coverings](#)

For more information and updates, visit [halton.ca/COVID19](https://www.halton.ca/COVID19) or call 311.

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