

**For Back-to-School 2021, all students and staff are required to wear mask indoors.**

# Masks Keep You Healthy!

Masks help prevent spread of the coronavirus by filtering out respiratory droplets—tiny drops of liquid that enter the air when you cough, talk, sing, or breathe. These droplets can contain viruses that could infect people near you. Three factors should be considered when choosing the right mask for you or your child.

## FIT



**Choose masks that fit snugly and cover nose, mouth, and chin.**

- All edges should touch your skin so that unfiltered air does not escape or enter through the gaps.
- Try different shapes to fit your face.
- Try “Ear savers” or mask straps to change the way a mask fits on your face.
- A bendable nose clip is important for keeping masks in place and closing gaps.
- If you cannot get a good fit with a flat medical-style mask, consider placing a cloth mask over it.
- This is known as “double masking.”

## FILTRATION



**Wear a mask with excellent filtration. Aim for 90-95%**

- New research shows that high-filtration “medical style” masks are very effective at protecting the wearer from infection. Other types of masks may be better at protecting others than protecting you.
- All CPS-provided masks achieve excellent filtration: independent testing found them to be at 90-95%.
- Masks are available from the school for all CPS employees and students.
- If shopping for masks, look for “high filtration” masks such as KF94, KN95, ASTM-rated, or flat medical-style masks that have been quality-tested.

## WEARABILITY



**Keeping your mask on all day is vital to safety.**

- Medical-style masks use materials that are breathable and light. For young children, look for small or child-size masks.
- Wearing a “fun” mask may improve motivation for kids. Try high-filtration medical-style masks with printed designs.
- For young children who will only wear cloth masks or for whom medical-style masks do not fit, consider cloth masks with multiple layers of tightly-woven fabric. Adding a filter improves filtration.
- For students with disabilities only, wearing a face shield without a mask may be allowed. Everyone else must wear masks under face shields.



## What to Wear to School

- **Adults and children ages 10 or older:** wear a high-filtration mask that fits your face snugly. This will help keep you safe, no matter what others are wearing. Masks of this quality can be obtained from school offices.
- **Children ages 9 and younger:** Find a mask that fits well and is comfortable enough to be worn all day. Medical masks are encouraged, but may not always be the best choice and are not required.

## Safely Handling Your Mask

- Masks that have been filtering germs all day may have germs on their outside surface. When removing a mask, hold it by the earloops and wash your hands afterwards.
- Bacterial and fungal particles can grow on cloth masks, so they need to be washed daily with your laundry or in hot soapy water in the sink.



## Making the Most of Your Mask

- **Face shields, worn with a mask,** add an extra barrier. This is important for those at greatest risk of coming into contact with the virus (healthcare workers, custodial staff, and staff who work face-to-face with children). CPS provides face shields for any employees and students who choose to wear them.
- Medical-style masks can be reused many times (40 hours of use or more) as long as they are not visibly damaged. Store used masks in the open air or a paper bag to dry until reuse.
- Medical-style masks do not need to be washed because bacteria and fungi do not grow on their material. If wet, wipe dry with a tissue.



## What Not to Wear

**Masks that slip** offer no protection



**Masks with Gaps** have particles go around, instead of through the filter



## NOT ALLOWED AT CPS

### Gaiters & Bandanas

These don't stay up and offer little protection



### Masks with Valves

Un-filtered air is directly aimed at others.



This fact sheet was developed by Cambridge Public Schools with input from Cambridge Public Health Department and the CPS Safety & Facilities Working Group. More information about mask research and where to find quality-tested masks has been developed by Jill Crittenden, PhD, Scientific Advisor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, co-chair of the City of Cambridge COVID-19 Expert Advisory Panel and member of N95DECON.org, a volunteer collective of scientists, engineers, and clinicians who research masks. View the resource: [tinyurl.com/JRC-mask-tips](https://tinyurl.com/JRC-mask-tips).