

Sample Policy for Mask Wearing

Required components of policy:

- Protocols for the wearing and removal of masks as guided by the CDC.
- How to address non-compliance by children as they adjust to mask wearing considering gentle reminders and other least restrictive means of supporting compliance.
- Program response to parent(s) or guardian(s) who refuse to permit their child to wear a mask.

Below is a SAMPLE policy. This sample contains all of the above required components but also includes components not specifically required. This sample policy is intended to serve as a guide as programs develop a policy that meets the needs of their program and the children and families they serve.

This policy outlines the requirements for mask wearing in _____ program. Updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics along with the guidance to assist children with the social emotional aspects of mask wearing found on the website of the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood were considered when developing this policy.

Mask Requirements

All staff are required to wear a mask or face covering at all times while in the program unless doing so would be contrary to his or her health or safety because of a medical condition, or subject to another exception listed below. If a medical condition exists, documentation will be required from a licensed medical practitioner.

Children age three and older are required to wear a mask or face covering except for the following:

- A child with a documented medical condition, special health care need, or developmental need (such as sensory integration) for whom wearing a mask or face covering would be contrary to their health or safety. A child with a documented disability or special education need for whom wearing a mask or face covering would be contrary to their needs. In addition, children and staff while involved with certain special education and related services activities like speech and language therapy or where lip reading is required.
- Children who are newly enrolled within the past two months and are working toward mask wearing.
- Children who have just turned three years old within the past two months and are acclimating to wearing a mask.

Breaks from Mask Wearing

- Children are not required to wear a mask while eating, sleeping or resting. During these times when masks are removed, distance between children will be maximized, maintaining at least 6 feet of distance wherever possible.
- One mask break will be held in the morning and one in the afternoon within cohorts of children. During these breaks, a physical distance between children will be maximized, maintaining at least 6 feet of distance wherever possible.
- Children will be allowed to remove their mask when outdoors.

Children Experiencing Difficulties with Mask Wearing

Staff will work with children who have difficulty complying with the mask requirement by issuing soft verbal reminders and other gentle means of supporting compliance. Children will not be disciplined or excluded from the program or isolated from their peers due to non-compliance with mask wearing. Staff will work with parents of children having difficulty wearing a face mask to develop a plan to support the child so that they will adapt to wearing a face mask. However, if a parent refuses to have their child wear a face mask, continued enrollment will not be permitted.

Wearing and Removing Masks

- Hands will be washed or sanitized before putting on a mask.

- All masks or face coverings shall cover the mouth and nose and wrap securely around the face. Face shields will not be permitted.
- Masks will not be put around the neck or up on the forehead.
- Efforts will be taken to not touch the mask when wearing and only handled by the ear loops or ties.
- Efforts will be taken not to touch eyes, nose, and mouth when removing.
- Hands will be washed immediately after removing a mask.
- When possible, staff will wash or sanitize their hands before and after helping a student put on or adjust a mask.
- Masks will be clearly identified with staff and children's names or initials, to avoid confusion or swapping.
- Masks will be stored in individually labeled containers or paper bags.
- Masks are required to be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.
- Parents will be asked to supply additional masks for their child in case a back-up mask is needed during the day and to facilitate every day washing of masks.

A copy of this policy will be maintained on site at the program.