

Policy #: T1 (Temporary policy related to COVID-19 Pandemic)
Title: FACE COVERINGS FOR VISITORS, PARENTS/FAMILY MEMBERS, AND EMPLOYEES
Date of Initial Approval: August 17, 2020
Revision/Re-authorization Dates:
Reviewers: MSA Superintendent; MSA Board

I. PURPOSE

To mitigate, to the extent reasonably possible, the transmission of COVID-19 by visitors, parents/family members and employees of the Minnesota State Academies (MSA) who may be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic carriers of the virus through use of face coverings while on MSA premises, as required by Executive Order 20-81.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The COVID-19 pandemic presents an unprecedented challenge to our state. The virus is highly contagious and potentially deadly. COVID-19 can be spread by people who do not have symptoms and do not know that they are infected.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), face coverings may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others. Face coverings are a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. This is called source control. COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet), so the use of face coverings is particularly important in settings where people are close to each other or where social distancing is difficult to maintain. Face coverings are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used by people in public settings.

To mitigate, to the extent reasonably possible, the transmission of respiratory droplets by the MSA community who may be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic carriers of COVID-19, visitors, parents/family members, and employees are required to wear face coverings as provided below while on MSA premises.

Visitors, parents/family members, and employees who fail to wear a face covering while on MSA premises as required may be requested to leave the premises.

Wearing face coverings is not a substitute for staying home when ill. Visitors, parents/family members, and employees should stay home if they are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

This policy is subject to change at the agency's discretion, including based on public health guidance.

III. SCOPE

This policy applies to all visitors, parents/family members, and employees while on MSA premises.

IV. DEFINITIONS AND KEY TERMS

Terms	Definitions
<i>Face Covering</i>	<p>A paper or disposable mask, a cloth face mask, a scarf, a bandanna, a neck gaiter, or a religious face covering that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fits snugly against the sides of the face; • Covers the nose and mouth completely; • Is secured over the nose and mouth; and • Allows for breathing without restriction. <p>Masks must be made with proper materials and sufficiently designed to prevent the spread of droplets. (i.e. the fabric used must not be too thin or porous)</p> <p>Medical-grade masks and respirators are sufficient face coverings, but to preserve adequate supplies, their purchase and use is discouraged for individuals who do not work in a health care setting or other occupations that require medical-grade protective equipment (e.g., certain construction occupations).</p> <p>Masks that incorporate a valve designed for easy exhaling, mesh masks, or face coverings with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design material, or vents are not sufficient face coverings because they allow droplets to be released.</p> <p>Face coverings are not considered personal protective equipment (PPE), are not appropriate substitutes for PPE, and are not intended to be used when individuals need PPE for protection against exposure to hazards.</p>
<i>Social Distance/Social Distancing</i>	<p>Keeping at least 6 feet of distance from other individuals who are not members of the individual’s household.</p>
<i>Employees</i>	<p>Includes contractors, substitutes, and others who provide services on the MSA campuses.</p>

V. EXCLUSIONS

This policy does not apply to visitors, parents/family members, and employees when they are in health care settings or other settings where they are required to wear medical-grade or other personal protective equipment (PPE) masks or respirators, rather than face coverings.

This policy does not apply to students of K-12 when they must instead comply with face covering and face shield guidance in Executive Order 20-81 or Minnesota Department of

Health guidance for schools. (see MSA's COVID preparedness plans for additional guidance related to students)

VI. GENERAL STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

A. Face Covering Requirement

Except as provided in sections II and III below, visitors, parents/family members, and employees must wear a face covering while indoors on MSA premises, including when waiting outdoors to enter an indoor space.

When face coverings are required, they must be worn to cover the nose and mouth completely.

Visitors, parents/family members, and employees may use MSA-provided face coverings or face coverings they bring from home, so long as the covering meets the standards set forth in the definition of "face covering" above. Visitors, parents/family members, and employees are responsible for washing any reusable face covering they use.

In addition to wearing face coverings, visitors, parents/family members, and employees should continue social distancing and proper handwashing practices. Wearing face coverings is not a substitute for these public health measures.

B. Temporary Removal of Face Covering

Visitors, parents/family members, and employees may temporarily remove face coverings on agency premises in the following situations:

- When testifying or speaking in situations or settings such as news conferences, legal proceedings, governmental meetings subject to the Open Meeting Law (MS 13D), presentations, or lectures, provided that social distancing is always maintained. Face shields should be considered as an alternative in these situations.
- When eating or drinking, provided social distance is maintained.
- During activities where the face covering will get wet.
- When asked to remove a face covering to verify an identity for lawful purposes.
- When a public safety worker is actively engaged in a public safety role, including but not limited to law enforcement, firefighters, or emergency personnel, in situations where wearing a face covering would seriously interfere with the performance of their public safety responsibilities.
- While communicating with an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing or has a disability, medical condition, or mental health condition that makes communication with that individual while wearing a face covering difficult, provided that social distancing is maintained to the extent possible.
- When the visitor, parent/family member, or employee is alone, including when alone in an office, a room, a cubicle with walls that are higher than face level when social distancing is maintained, or an enclosed work area.

C. Exemptions from Face Covering Requirement

The following individuals are exempt from the face covering requirement:

- Children who are five years old and under.
- Visitors, parents/family members, and employees with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for the individual to maintain a face covering. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals who have a medical condition that compromises their ability to breathe, and individuals who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance.
 - Employees unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability must request a reasonable accommodation as provided in [HR/LR Policy #1433 ADA Reasonable Accommodations](#).
 - Non-employees unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability must request a reasonable modification.
- Wearing a face covering would create a job hazard for the employee or others as determined by local, state, or federal regulations, or workplace safety and health standards/guidelines. For example:
 - The employee's ability to safely perform their job duties is negatively affected because the use of a face covering obstructs their vision or causes safety gear or safety glasses to be compromised.
 - The employee works in a setting where the face covering may increase the risk of heat-related illness or cause safety concerns due to introduction of a hazard (for instance, straps getting caught in machinery)
- Unless otherwise instructed by their supervisor, employees are not required to wear a face covering when they are working outdoors and able to consistently maintain social distancing.
 - These employees must wear a face covering if they cannot maintain social distancing.
 - These employees must wear a face covering if they are waiting outdoors to enter an indoor workplace or public service environment, or if they enter an indoor workplace or public service environment.
 - Employees must carry a face covering with them at all times while working outdoors.

D. Consequences of Failing to Wear a Face Covering When Required

Visitors, parents/family members, and employees who fail to wear a face covering as required will be offered a face covering and will be requested to wear it to cover the nose and mouth completely. If the visitor, parent/family member, or employee still refuses to wear a face covering, is not exempt from the face covering requirement, and is not in a situation in which temporary removal of face coverings is authorized, they will be requested to leave the premises.

If the staff member sent home is an employee who is unable to telework, they may be placed into no-pay status (ETL – Scheduled Hours Not Worked) until they comply with the

face covering requirement. Prior to being placed into no-pay status, the employee will be offered a meeting with their supervisor to hear the reason for being placed into no-pay status and to tell their side of the story. Employees who are covered by a collective bargaining agreement may have union representation at the meeting.

In addition, under Executive Order 20-81, individuals who fail to comply with the face covering requirement may receive a petty misdemeanor citation and a fine of up to \$100.

Legal References:

MMB Face Coverings Policy for Visitors and Customers (effective July 25, 2020)