



# Masking Updates for School Employees

All school employees must wear surgical-grade masks (also referred to as medical procedure masks) or higher level PPE (e.g. KN95 or N95 respirator masks).

For those wearing surgical masks, double masking, with a cloth face covering worn over the surgical mask, is recommended for enhanced protection. **Cloth face coverings alone are no longer acceptable, as they do not provide the same level of source control or personal protection as a proper surgical mask or higher level PPE.**

Full compliance with this directive is expected to occur no later than two weeks after the post-holiday reopening date of the school or district.

All staff are also required to wear masks outdoors on school campuses, except when eating or drinking, when in crowded outdoor settings where distancing cannot be easily and reliably maintained.

## Know which Masks Provide the Best Protection Against COVID-19

Good	Better	Best
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Fabric mask with three or more cloth layers <b>(no longer acceptable)</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Double mask (surgical mask + cloth mask)</li><li>Fitted medical mask (surgical mask)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>N95</li><li>KN95</li><li>KF94</li></ul>

## ACCEPTABLE TYPES OF MASKS

### Surgical masks

Also called medical procedure, dental masks, or disposable masks. Some surgical masks that are intended for medical use are regulated by the FDA.

- Look for a mask that has multiple layers of non-woven material and a nose wire.
- The fit of surgical masks can be improved with a simple adjustment (knotting and tucking) or by using a mask brace.
- The fit AND filtration of surgical masks can be improved by wearing it UNDER a cloth mask (see Double masking).
- Be aware that there are surgical-style masks that may look the same as true medical procedure or surgical masks but may not work as well.
  - Tip: One sign that a mask is not a real surgical mask is if you put a drop of water on the front of the mask and it soaks into the mask instead of forming beads on the surface.
- Throw the mask away if it is wet/or dirty or after a day of use, whichever comes first.



### N95 and KN95 Respirators

These are types of disposable respirators that are designed to filter at least 95% of airborne particles.

- N95 Respirators** are regulated by both the FDA (if marketed for medical purposes) and the CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).



## COVID-19 Masks

---

- **KN95 Respirators** are similar to N95s but are made to meet Chinese standards. KN95s are not regulated by NIOSH and may not filter as effectively. Be aware that about 60% of KN95s sold in the US are fake. If you choose to use a KN95, we recommend finding one that has been [assessed by the National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory](#) and found to have a minimum "filtration efficiency" of 95% or higher.

**N95 and KN95 respirators that fit well and provide a tight seal on your face protect you better than a cloth mask on its own or a surgical mask.** They may be less comfortable because they filter better and fit more tightly.

- N95/KN95s will only provide full protection if they form a tight seal on your face:
  - Find the right size, style, and model. Respirators with straps that go around the back of the head provide a better seal than those with ear loops. See [NIOSH instructions](#) for how to put on, take off and check the seal of a respirator.
  - Check the seal each time you put one on (NIOSH-approved N95 respirators include instructions on how to do a seal check).
- N95/KN95s are not recommended for people with facial hair or for small children because they cannot achieve a proper fit.
- People with breathing difficulties should check with their doctor before wearing a respirator.
- Do not wear an N95/KN95 with another mask (i.e., do not double mask).
- N95/KN95s are designed for one-time use. They should be thrown away once they become wet or dirty OR after a day of use, whichever comes first.
- Beware of [counterfeit \(fake\) respirators](#) as they may not be able to provide the promised protection.
  - NIOSH tips for [warning signs of websites selling fake products](#) and [fake standard or approval markings](#) (includes useful photos).
  - CDC [Factors to Consider When Planning to Purchase Respirators from Another Country](#).

### Do not use masks that:

- Are made of loosely woven fabrics.
- Are made of a fabric that is hard to breathe through such as vinyl, leather, or plastic.
- Have valves, vents, or holes.
  - Exception: The [CDC states](#) that a NIOSH-certified N95 respirator with exhalation valve can be used.

Bandanas and scarves are not recommended (unless you wear a mask underneath).

See CDC [Types of Masks](#) for more information.

**TIPS!** It is recommended to have more than one mask readily available so that a dirty or wet mask can be easily replaced with a clean one. When you are out, carry a spare mask and hand sanitizer. If your mask gets damp or wet, replace it with a clean dry one.