

# Guidance for Masking at School

## Guidance for Use of Protective Masks for Children at School During the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, children may be required to wear face masks at school, except when there is a written medical excuse due to an underlying health issue. While many children may initially be apprehensive about wearing a mask, most adjust quickly. Masking is safe; there are no negative effects of wearing a mask. Masks are recommended for children with asthma or other diseases of the lung, and do not tend to make it difficult for them to breathe. For example, children with cystic fibrosis, a severe lung disorder, even outside of the current pandemic are often advised to wear masks when out in public, and these masks have no impact on their ability to breathe.

There are very few circumstances where there is a health reason for a child to not wear a mask. Children with lung disease of any kind or those who are immunocompromised are at greatest risk for having significant illness if they do get COVID-19, therefore it is important for them to be protected by wearing a mask.

Some children with an autism spectrum disorder or other developmental disorder may not understand the purpose of wearing a mask and may panic or not tolerate a mask, and therefore be unable to wear one.

Children tend to be the age group least affected by COVID-19, but if they become infected they may increase the spread of the disease, especially to parents and grandparents at home. While they are attending school, it is important for them to wear a face mask to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Children who are treated in a specialty clinic at Arkansas Children's are also cared for by a Primary Care Physician (PCP). With the above guidance for consideration and to prevent confusion, we defer to the PCP to provide masking guidance for the individual child.

**By including the name of the child below, the PCP's signature indicates that this child should not be required to wear a mask at school due to a valid health concern.**

\_\_\_\_\_ has a health condition that should excuse him/her from having to wear a mask at school.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of PCP)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of PCP)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

