

## **Protocol for Mask Use - Students**

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Updated March 8, 2021

### **Mask/Face Covering Accommodations and Exemptions**

In accordance with direction from the Ministry of Education, face covering/masks are mandatory in all elementary and secondary schools for students from Grade 1 to Grade 12 and for all adult students attending in-person programs in any Catholic Continuing Education Centre. Face coverings/masks are also strongly recommended for students in Kindergarten.

The Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB) recognizes its duty to accommodate students and staff with medical or other prevalent conditions that may prevent or limit the wearing of face coverings/masks.

Upon request from a parent/guardian, accommodations, including exemptions, in the use of masks/face coverings for a student at the DCDSB may be granted by a Principal, in consultation with their Superintendent of Education, under any of the following conditions:

1. Medical documentation is provided outlining the reason for a mask accommodation, including an exemption; or
2. The student has a [Plan of Care](#) that would support the request for accommodation, including exemption (e.g. asthma, seizures, etc.), or there are other school documented concerns in an Individual Education Plan, Safety Plan, Positive Behaviour Intervention Plan, Student Information System notes, etc.); or
3. A documented accommodation request for other disability or learning-related needs. Learning-related needs may include an accommodation for mask removal during speech language therapy or an English as a Second Language (ESL) or French as a Second Language (FSL) class. The learning-related need must be clearly set out and the accommodation of mask removal may be specific to certain portions or elements of the school day.

### **Process for Mask Accommodations and Exemptions for Students**

1. A parent/guardian who seeks an accommodation, including an exemption, is required to fill out the Mask/Face Covering Accommodation Request Form (the "Accommodation Request Form")
2. The Principal/Vice-Principal arranges a meeting (phone/virtual) to discuss/clarify concerns

3. If appropriate, steps for gradual/increased mask use may be encouraged (e.g., student with special needs who has sensory issues with mask wearing)
4. A face shield may be offered as an accommodation/alternative
5. If a mask accommodation or exemption is granted, this will be indicated in PowerSchool
6. Even if a mask accommodation/exemption is given for in-school, we encourage mask wearing on the bus
7. In the case where a request for an exemption does not meet the above criteria, and the Principal and Superintendent of Education do not accept the reason given to grant an exemption, the parent should be informed that the refusal of their child to wear a mask places the health and safety of other students and staff at risk. In this case, the parent will be informed that their child is therefore required to wear a mask or be re-directed to the online school. In taking part in the online school, the child will have access to the DCDSB's educational programs and Ministry curriculum for their grade level.



## Mask/Face Covering Accommodation/Exemption Request Form

Student Name:

Grade:

School:

Homeroom Teacher:

Parent/Guardian Name:

Parent/Guardian Phone Number:

I am requesting an exemption for my child from wearing a non-medical face mask/face covering while:        at school and/or        on transportation.

Reason:

Accommodation requested:

I have attached documentation from a medical professional:        Yes        No

I understand and acknowledge that COVID-19 is a contagious virus that may result in respiratory illness and other medical complications for those who contract it. The Ministry of Education and/or the Board require the mandatory use of masks or face coverings by all students in grades 1 to 12 as a public health measure designed to decrease the likelihood of transmission of COVID-19 in schools, subject to exemptions. I understand and acknowledge that the accommodation and/or exemption from wearing a mask or face covering that I am seeking on behalf of the student may increase the risk of the student contracting COVID-19 at school and hereby waive any claims for liability

associated therewith against the Board, its employees, officers, Board of Trustees, third party contractors and their successors. I understand and agree to follow all other Board health protocols in place in respect of COVID-19.

I also understand that refusing to wear a mask puts the health and safety of other students and staff at risk. Therefore, if my request for a mask exemption is not granted, I agree to my child wearing a mask at school or being enrolled in the online school where they will have access to the Board's educational programs and Ministry curriculum for their grade level.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

**For School Use Only:**

Approved (include reason):

Not Approved (include reason):

Principal's Signature:

Date:

Superintendent Signature:

Date:

If consultation with Director of School Support Services is required, add signature below:

Director of Education Signature:

Personal information collected on this form is collected, used and disclosed in accordance with the Education Act, as amended from time to time, and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, as amended from time to time, and will be used for the purpose of administering the return to school in the 2020/2021 school year in compliance with the Ministry of Education direction and requirements and public health protocols, and other similar or related purposes.