



Waukesha County Public Health continues to recommend that schools follow [all CDC Best Practices](#) for mitigating the spread of COVID-19, including mask wearing. Wearing a face covering in schools will not only help reduce the spread of COVID-19 among students and staff but will also reduce the chance that they spread it to their families.

### **Update:**

Masks continue to be an important part of disease mitigation in a school setting and Waukesha County has seen successful implementation of face-covering policies in schools throughout the County. These policies have allowed our schools to stay open throughout most of the 2020-'21 school year keeping children in the classrooms with few disruptions.

COVID-19 spreads via respiratory droplets among people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). The use of cloth face coverings is particularly important in settings where people are close to each other or where social distancing is difficult to maintain. Until such a time that the majority of the community has immunity to the COVID-19 virus, it is vitally important to continue following the steps outlined by the CDC to prevent the continued spread of COVID-19.

Cloth face coverings are recommended by public health experts and the CDC as a simple barrier. Cloth face coverings help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling through the air and onto other people when the person coughing, sneezing, talking, or raising their voice is wearing a cloth face covering. This recommendation is based on what we know about the role respiratory droplets play in the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, paired with emerging evidence from clinical and laboratory studies that shows cloth face coverings reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth.

### **Proper Use of Face Coverings:**

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily

*\*Cloth face coverings should **not** be worn by:*

- Children younger than 2 years old
- Anyone who has trouble breathing

### **Special Circumstances:**

Based upon information from the American Academy of Pediatrics, Waukesha County recognizes that mask usage may not be practical for students of all ages, especially the very young. Schools and school districts should consider age, physical abilities, developmental, respiratory, tactile aversion, other conditions and needs, and grade level of students. For certain populations, the use of cloth face coverings by teachers may impede the education process. These include students who are deaf or hard of hearing, students receiving speech/language services, young students in early education programs, and English-language learners.