

## **PROCEDURE CONCERNING USE OF FACE MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS**

In accordance with requirements and guidelines issued by the Connecticut State Department of Education (“SDE”), LEARN requires that all individuals entering a LEARN school building, a LEARN facility, or a LEARN transportation vehicle wear an appropriate face covering. An appropriate face covering shall consist of a cloth mask or disposable procedure-style mask that completely covers the individual’s nose and mouth.

An appropriate face covering shall not include “neck gaiters,” bandanas or exhalation valve masks. Also, a face shield alone is not an acceptable substitute for a face mask/face covering, but may be used in conjunction with a cloth or disposable face mask/face covering.

Any individual who presents for entrance into a school building, LEARN facility or LEARN transportation vehicle who is not wearing an appropriate face covering shall be provided an appropriate face covering by LEARN.

Compliance with these protocols shall be mandatory for all individuals while in a school building, LEARN facility and/or any transportation vehicle, unless an applicable exception applies. Any individual who refuses to wear an appropriate face covering at all times while in a LEARN school building, LEARN facility or transportation vehicle shall be denied admission and/or required to leave the premises, unless an applicable exception applies. In addition, failure to comply with these protocols may lead to disciplinary action for students and staff, and exclusion from school property for members of the community, in accordance with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and/or Board policies.

All individuals participating in or attending any LEARN sponsored activities must wear an appropriate face covering, whether or not those activities occur in a school building, District facility or District transportation vehicle.

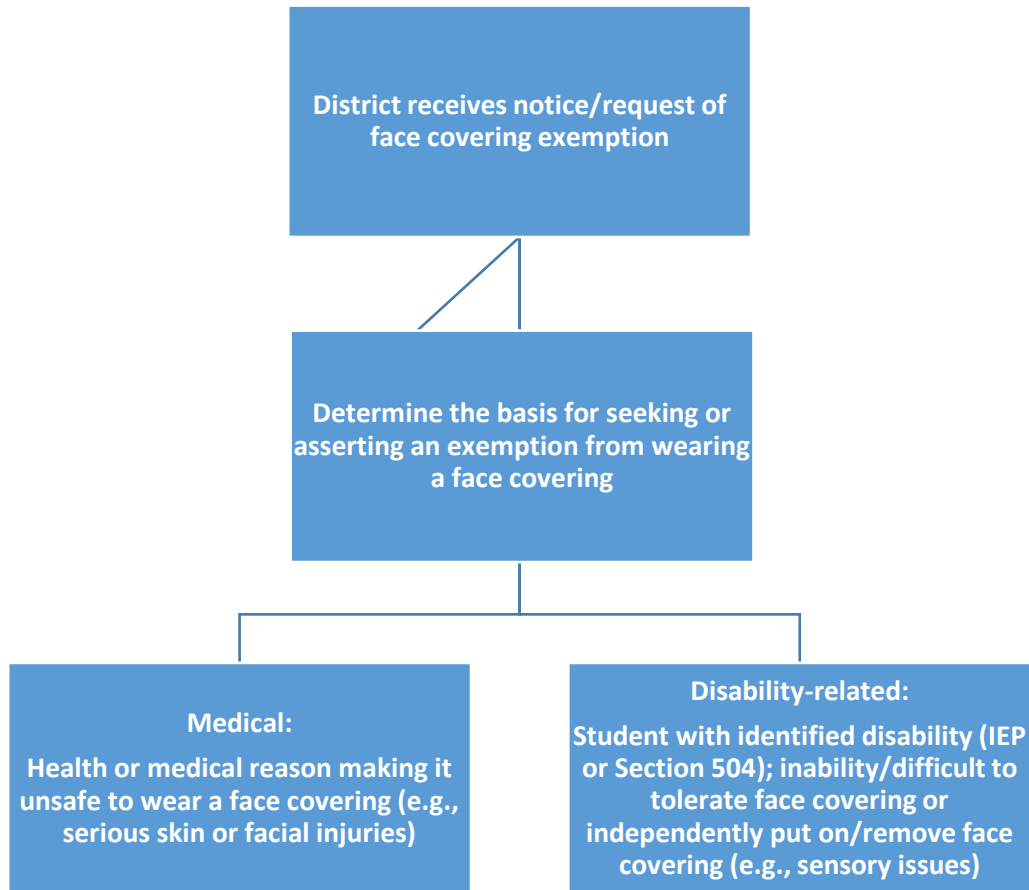
☐ Students and all individuals being transported on LEARN transportation vehicles are required to wear appropriate face coverings (face coverings must be worn prior to boarding and while exiting the vehicle), in accordance with LEARN’s Transportation Protocols. Please see below for additional procedures for face covering exemption requirements.

☐ Students, staff and all individuals inside school buildings and LEARN facilities are required to wear appropriate face coverings except if: (i) the individual cannot wear the face covering because the individual has difficulty breathing, is unconscious, or incapacitated; (ii) the individual cannot remove the face covering without assistance; (iii) the individual has a documented medical reason making it unsafe to wear a mask; or (iv) the individual has a disability that causes the individual to be unable to wear a face covering.

The student has a medical exemption that is documented with a current 504 plan or and Individualized Education Program (IEP).

- ☐ Face coverings may only be removed within the school building for the following reasons: (i) eating/drinking; (ii) on school grounds with appropriate social distancing implemented; and (iii) educational or medical activities requiring removal of masks (speech and language, evaluations, etc.) ONLY under circumstances when the school has implemented appropriate and LEARN-approved mitigating measures (such as gowns, face shields, additional social distancing, physical barriers for LEARN employees and/or students).
- ☐ If a student claims a medical or disability-related exemption from wearing a face covering, LEARN shall follow the Decision Tree - Face Covering Exemptions in these Protocols. If LEARN determines the request is based on medical need, the parent or guardian and the student's treating physician must complete the Face Covering Exemption Request Form. If LEARN determines the request is based on disability (skill deficit), LEARN shall promptly convene a Planning and Placement Team ("PPT") Meeting or Section 504 Team meeting as appropriate to discuss and consider necessary programming revisions, accommodations, modifications, etc.
- ☐ If a staff member claims a medical or disability-related exemption from wearing a face covering, the District shall comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and requirements regarding the evaluation of, and response to, any such claim.
- ☐ Students shall be offered face-covering breaks during the school day as determined appropriate by the Administration. A face-covering break consists of the student removing the face covering from the student's own nose and mouth for a short period of time. School district personnel supervising students shall only permit a face-covering break when individuals who are indoors are a minimum of 6 feet apart or other LEARN-approved mitigating measures that have been implemented, and when individuals who are outdoors are a minimum of 6 feet apart. When practicable, school district personnel supervising students shall schedule mask breaks outdoors.

## **Decision-Making Tree - Face Covering Exemptions**



Important Note: The need for a medical exemption for the wearing of face coverings of the styles recommended for use in schools for source control is rare. Medical contraindications to the wearing of cloth or other similar loose fitting masks generally are limited to individuals suffering from severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) such as might be seen with cystic fibrosis, severe emphysema, heart failure, or significant facial burns that would cause extreme pain or interfere with the healing of a skin graft. These severe medical conditions will be rare in students or staff capable of presenting to the school for work or instruction (in most cases these individuals would not be able to move about freely without significant assistance). In addition, for anyone suffering from any of these underlying conditions, the strong recommendation would be for that person to remain at home and engage in fully virtual learning due to their risk of developing severe complications if they did become infected with COVID-19. Mild or intermittent respiratory or other common conditions such as asthma, cardiovascular diseases, kidney disease, or other similar conditions generally are not considered contraindications to the wearing of loose-fitting face coverings.