

# MASK MANDATE FAQS

This information references the Mask Order Mandate that was issued on August 14, 2020 by the Utah Department of Health

## ARE MASKS SAFE TO WEAR ALL DAY?

Yes. Many studies show that masks are safe. Only mild and rare side effects have been seen, such as skin irritation, headaches, and general discomfort. There is no evidence that wearing a mask is dangerous or causes low oxygen or high carbon dioxide levels in healthy individuals, even when masks are layered on top of each other. It is safe to use a mask with health conditions, such as asthma and allergies. In fact, wearing a mask during exercise has been used as a treatment to reduce exercise-induced asthma.

## IS A CLOTH COVERING THE SAME AS A MASK?

Yes, as long as the mask covers the face and mouth without openings, secures under the chin, fits snugly against the nose and sides of the face, and does not have an exhalation vent or valve.

A plastic or clear face shield is NOT the same thing as a plastic or clear face mask.

## ARE NECK GAITERS OKAY TO USE?

The public health order allows neck gaiters, neck fleeces, and bandanas, as long as they meet the definition of a face mask. As research on the effectiveness of masks continues to evolve, updates to the definition of a face mask in the public health order may change.

## ARE MASKS WITH EXHALATION VALVES OR VENTS SAFE TO USE?

These types of masks do not trap respiratory droplets and do not stop the person wearing the mask from spreading Covid-19 to others. Face masks with one-way valves or vents let air out through a hole in the material. The public health order regarding masks in schools does not consider face masks with a vent or exhalation valve to be an approved face mask.

## IF YOU WEAR A FACE MASK, DO YOU STILL NEED TO PHYSICALLY DISTANCE?

Yes. Face masks are very effective to reduce the spread of Covid-19. However, wearing a face mask does not eliminate the risk completely. If you wear a mask and physically distance, the chance of being exposed to Covid-19 is much lower.

## HOW WILL THIS ORDER BE ENFORCED?

Parents and students can be sent home for not wearing a face covering. Existing behavior policies and procedures at all schools should be updated to reflect the circumstances and to support teachers and staff in their response to student behaviors related to the spread of Covid-19.

## HOW DO I GET A MASK EXEMPTION FOR MY CHILD?

Parents need to get a medical directive from their child's healthcare provider stating that the child has a known medical or mental health condition or other disability and can't wear a mask during school or needs other accommodations. Parents are responsible for providing the medical directive to the child's school, as well as the appropriate school paperwork. This directive must be signed by a Doctor of Medicine (MD), Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO), Physician's Assistant (PA), or Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN).