

EMERGENCY FACE MASK POLICY FOR STUDENTS, EMPLOYEES, VISITORS, AND VENDORS FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

In light of the aggressive transmission of the delta variant to COVID-19, given the current elevated rates of hospitalization and positivity for COVID-19 in Sarasota County, and given the current high rate of positivity for COVID-19 in Sarasota County schools and the corresponding impact on the operation of the school district, the School Board of Sarasota County took testimony at its August 17, 2021 Board workshop on these topics. The School Board of Sarasota County finds credible and authoritative the testimony it heard at said workshop, incorporates it into this emergency policy as its findings of fact, and adopts said testimony in its entirety as its factual basis for this emergency policy.

- I. For the first 90 days following the date this emergency policy becomes effective, each student, employee, visitor, and vendor must wear a medical grade or COVID-style mask while at school, while on school property, during school sponsored activities, and during School Board-provided transportation to and from school or school-sponsored activities, at all times while indoors or outdoors in a crowded setting.
- II. Exceptions: Students, employees, visitors, and vendors may remove masks in order to eat or drink, for medical reasons, and consistent with a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- III. Accommodations: The School Board must consider accommodations in accordance with state and federal law when interpreting this emergency policy.
- IV. Automatic Suspension and Activation: While this emergency policy is in effect, the requirements regarding wearing a mask shall be automatically suspended any time the positivity rate for COVID-19 within Sarasota County drops below 8% for three (3) consecutive days, as determined by the data maintained by the Florida Department of Health. At any time while this emergency policy is in effect but suspended as described in this section, this requirements contained in this policy shall automatically re-activate and apply any time the positivity rate in Sarasota County for COVID-19 is above 10%. The superintendent or superintendent's designee shall communicate with representatives of the Florida Department of Health on a daily basis about the most recent available daily data regarding the COVID-19 positivity rate in Sarasota County. In the event the suspension or re-activation thresholds described in this section are met, the superintendent or superintendent's designee shall promptly publicly communicate that a suspension or re-activation has occurred. Upon such communication, the mandates of this policy shall apply.
- V. Translucent face shields that restrict the outward free flow of air beyond the individual's nose and mouth area but that do not obscure from the view of others, the individual's eyes may be worn by any student, including as a supplemental

mask to masks mandated by this emergency policy.

- VI. Gaiters, buffs, or bandanas may not be worn as an alternative to face masks.
- VII. All face masks and shields must comply with school dress codes and the Code of Student Conduct, the Employee Handbook, and all School Board collectively-bargained policies, including the School Board's policies against harassment and bullying.
- VIII. Violations of this emergency policy may lead to the imposition of discipline or the revocation of access or other privileges.
- IX. This emergency policy becomes effective immediately upon adoption and will expire 90 days after it becomes effective. Upon becoming effective it shall temporarily constitute a modification to the previously-enacted 2021-2022 Face Mask policy. To the extent the previously enacted 2021-2022 Face Mask policy conflicts with this emergency policy, the previously enacted 2021-2022 Face Mask policy shall be temporarily suspended. Upon expiration of this emergency policy, the previously enacted 2021-2022 Face Mask policy pertaining to students, employees, visitors, and vendors shall again become effective and remain so until its sunsets June 30, 2022, unless extended or amended prior to that date.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

FS 1001.41; FS 1001.42; FS 1001.43; FS 120.54(4)

LAWS IMPLEMENTED:

FS 1001.42(4) & (8); FS 1003.31; FS 1012.23

ADOPTED: 08/20/21