



ALERTS

Masks To Be Mandatory In Indiana Schools, Governor Says

July 24, 2020 | [Elkhart](#) | [Fort Wayne](#) | [Indianapolis](#) | [South Bend](#)

Highlights

New Executive Order effective July 27, 2020, will require Indiana students in grades 3-12, faculty, staff, volunteers, and anyone else in schools to wear face coverings

Exceptions will be granted for strenuous physical activity, medical or health purposes, and disabilities, exercising, and eating and drinking

The Executive Order has not yet been signed and may contain additional exceptions that were not mentioned upon its announcement

On July 22, Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb announced his plan to sign an Executive Order that will require face coverings to be worn in public indoor spaces, commercial entities, public transportation, and outdoor public space when social distancing from non-household members cannot be achieved. According to the announcement, the mandate will become effective July 27, until at least Aug. 26, 2020.

What is clear is that students in grades 3-12, faculty, staff, volunteers, and anyone else who will be in the schools will be required to wear a mask.

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The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) had released on June 5 [Indiana's Considerations for Learning and Safe Schools, IN-CLASS](#), the state's COVID-19 Health and Safety Re-entry Guidance document for schools. IN-CLASS had recommended that all employees and students wear cloth face coverings, but specifically noted that students could forego the use of a mask when social distancing.

However, the Executive Order now will require the use of masks in schools by students as well, including during co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, with exceptions for strenuous physical activity, medical or health purposes, disabilities, exercising, and eating and drinking. Gov. Holcomb indicated that enforcement of this requirement will have an emphasis on education.

The announcement highlighted that face coverings can be made of synthetic or natural fabrics, including cotton, silk or linen, and can include a plastic face shield that covers the nose and mouth. Face coverings may be factory-made, sewn by hand, or improvised from household items, including scarves, bandannas, T-shirts, sweatshirts or towels.

But for certain student populations, the use of 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. There are products (e.g., face coverings with clear panels in the front and face shields) to facilitate the best possible communication among these populations. The IDOE [offers a list of resources](#) to locate such face covering options.

The [Executive Order](#) specifies that either a face covering or a face shield meets the mandate requirements. Additional exemptions to those specified for K-12 schools include:

- Faculty and staff, other than to prepare food or meals, are not required to wear a face covering or face shield if 6 feet social of distancing can be maintained
- Students and staff may remove face coverings or face shields during in-person instruction as long as 6 feet of social distancing can be maintained in the classroom or place of instruction
- Instructors may remove facial coverings as long as long as 6 feet of social distancing can be maintained
- Face coverings or face shields may be removed during recess periods as long as social distancing can be maintained
- For extracurricular and co-curricular activities, when not engaging in strenuous activity or subject to an exemption, students and all personnel must wear face coverings or face shields unless 6 feet of social distancing can be maintained

Schools are responsible for developing and implementing their own enforcement plans.

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