



COVID-19 Preparedness Plan: Face Covering Policy

In accordance with Executive Order 20-81 enacted by Minnesota governor Tim Walz, face coverings must be worn under the conditions outlined below beginning Monday, July 27, 2020. The state of Minnesota recognizes that child care settings have unique needs that do not always permit universal face coverings when indoors, therefore there are specific exemptions outlined in the executive order that are explained below. Montessori Renaissance Academy (MRA) reserves the right to request individuals to read and sign a waiver stating they have read and understood our COVID-19 Preparedness Plan: Face Covering Policy.

Individuals required to wear a face covering. The following individuals must follow the face covering requirements as directed under Executive Order 20-81.

- a. **Staff.** All MRA staff working in an indoor care setting must wear a face covering in communal areas (i.e. hallways, bathrooms, breakrooms, etc.). Face covering must be worn by staff who intermix between classrooms. Alternatively, staff may wear a face shield when wearing a face covering is problematic.¹
- b. **Parents.** All parents who enter the building (i.e. dropping off or picking up their child) must wear a face covering throughout the duration of their time in the building.² To further ensure the safety of students, staff, parents, and family members, we ask that parents remain in the hallways and do not enter into any of the rooms (stepping through a doorway and off the blue hallway carpet), with the exception of the adult bathrooms. Parents should be able to safely drop off or pick up their child without entering a room by standing at the edge of the doorway and releasing their child to a staff member in the room or having their child come to them at the doorway; if you need any assistance, please notify a staff member.
- c. **Any Adults.** Similarly to parents, any adults (i.e. grandparents, nannies, prospective families, etc.) who enter the building (i.e. dropping off a child, picking up a child, touring the school, etc.) must wear a face covering throughout the duration of their time in the building.³ If you are dropping off or picking up a child we ask that you remain in the hallways and do not enter into any of the rooms (stepping through a doorway and off the blue hallway carpet), with the exception of the adult bathrooms. Individuals should be able to safely drop off or pick up a child without entering a room by standing at the edge of the doorway and releasing the child to a staff member in the room or having the child come to them at the doorway; if you need any assistance, please notify a staff member.
- d. **Children over the age of 5.** Please refer to page 2 for our exact policy on children wearing face coverings.

Exempt individuals. The following individuals are exempt from face covering requirements as directed under Executive Order 20-81.

- a. Individuals with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for the individual to maintain a face covering. This includes individuals who have a medical condition that compromises their ability to breathe.⁴
- b. Children who are five years old and under. Those who are under two-years old should never wear a face covering due to the risk of suffocation.⁵
- c. Children who are sleeping, unable to remove a face covering or face shield without assistance, or who cannot tolerate a shield or covering due to a developmental, medical, or behavioral health condition should not wear a face covering or face shield.⁶

¹ "Masking Requirements for Child Care: COVID-19." *Minnesota Dept. of Health*, 22 July 2020, www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/masks.html#child.

² Executive Order. No. 20-81, 2020, p. 5.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Executive Order. No. 20-81, 2020, p. 4.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Executive Order. No. 20-81, 2020, p. 8.

Children wearing face coverings.

As previously stated, children who are five years old and under are exempt from the executive order.⁶ The state recognizes that there are child care providers, such as MRA, who have both children under the age of 5 and children over the age of 5 in the same facility, therefore, there is an optional exemption listed on page 9 of the executive order which MRA is opting to follow.

The optional exemption states: If a child care provider cares for children who are five and under, but also cares for children older than five, the business can exempt children older than five from face covering and face shield requirements only if the exemption is clearly communicated in writing with all enrolled families and included in the business's COVID-19 Preparedness Plan.⁷

Therefore, our policy on children wearing face coverings are as follows.

- a. **Toddlers.** The toddlers will never be wearing face coverings as some of them may be under the age of 2 and the risk of suffocation is present. Additionally, the toddlers are generally unable to reliably wear a face covering or face shield in compliance with CDC guidance on How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-gettingsick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>).⁸
- b. **Children's House.** Children's House students are not required to wear a face covering even if they are over the age of 5. This is because a portion of the Children's House students are under the age of 5 and the other portion of the Children's House students are over the age of 5, therefore making face coverings requirements complicated or unclear for the children to understand.
- c. **Elementary.** Elementary students are not required to wear a face covering while in their classroom, however, when they are in communal areas or with any of the toddler or Children's House students, they will be required to wear a face covering. While the optional exemption allows for our policy to not require Elementary students to wear face coverings in general, MRA recognizes there is an opportunity to mitigate the spread of the virus by requiring face coverings when the Elementary students are not in their cohort as they are generally able to reliably wear a face covering or face shield in compliance with CDC guidance.

While the executive order states that children between the ages of two and five who can reliably wear a face covering or face shield in compliance with CDC guidance on How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-gettingsick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>) may do so, MRA is not requiring it.

It is up to the parents' sole discretion if they would like their child to wear a face covering or face shield.

This includes if a parent would like their Elementary student to wear their face covering or face shield more than what is required by MRA.

MRA reserves the right to remove a child's face covering or face shield if they can not reliably wear it in compliance with CDC guidance as previously stated.

Circumstances where mandatory face coverings for children may be temporarily removed.

- a. **Recess.** This includes recess held in the gym or outside.⁹
- b. **Gym class.** This includes gym class held in the gym or outside.¹⁰
- c. **Eating or drinking.** This includes lunch and snack.¹¹
- d. **Music and performances.** This includes children who are involving singing, acting, public speaking, or playing musical instruments.¹²
- e. **Outside.** Based on the activity taking place outside, the administration of MRA will decide whether it is necessary for the Elementary students to wear a face covering or not.

6 Executive Order. No. 20-81, 2020, p. 4.

7 Executive Order. No. 20-81, 2020, p. 9.

8 Executive Order. No. 20-81, 2020, p. 8.

9 Executive Order. No. 20-81, 2020, p. 10.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Executive Order. No. 20-81, 2020, p. 11.

Exemptions for staff.

- a. Staff with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for them to wear a face covering. This includes staff who have a medical condition that compromises their ability to breathe. They should consider using alternatives to face coverings, including clear face shields.¹³
- b. Staff in an indoor classroom or care setting that are confined to one group or cohort of children.¹⁴ This means that staff in their “home” room (i.e. teachers who are solely with their cohort of students in their classroom) are able to remove their face covering or face shield while in their “home” room. If staff in their “home” room leave their home room (i.e. enter the hallway, go to another room, etc.) they must put their face covering or face shield on. This does not apply to staff who float between rooms such as those helping to cover staff break times or deliver meals. In those cases, staff must be required to wear face coverings.¹⁵
- c. **When alone.** If a staff member is in a room alone they may remove their face covering, but they must have a face covering immediately available to be prepared for person-to-person interactions and to be used when no longer alone.¹⁶

Montessori Renaissance Academy values the health and safety of all students, staff, parents, and family members. This policy regarding face coverings has been prepared following the requirements and recommendations of Executive Order 20-81 to help mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus. MRA reserves the right to change and update this policy as it deems fit as long as it still aligns with the state of Minnesota’s requirements. If and when this policy gets changed or updated, MRA will notify its parents and families enrolled of the changes or updates. MRA does its best to prevent the spread of illness by requiring all children and staff to wash their hands and applying hand sanitizer (if necessary), but MRA cannot guarantee that staff, children, parents, or family members will never get sick while in the facility.

13 “Masking Requirements for Child Care: COVID-19.” *Minnesota Dept. of Health*, 22 July 2020, www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/masks.html#child.

14 Executive Order. No. 20-81, 2020, p. 9.

15 Ibid.

16 Executive Order. No. 20-81, 2020, p. 7.