



MASK EXEMPTION AND ACCOMMODATIONS FOR IEP AND 504

Schools will follow the interactive process to identify possible accommodations for those students with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability which is a barrier to wearing a mask. Mask exemptions and accommodations for students who cannot wear face masks will be determined through the IEP or 504 processes. Parents or guardians should work with the site principal or assistant principal to begin the IEP or 504 team meeting process to discuss accommodations.

Mask exemptions may be provided to students that meet the medical or disability conditions using an interactive process. Staff will implement and document an interactive process through an IEP or 504 team meeting with parents to develop a plan to address a student's needs and reasonable accommodations. It is strongly encouraged that a District nurse attend the meeting or provide a consultation prior to the meeting to provide medical expertise. The IEP or 504 teams should request a "release of information" from the family for medical information when a medical condition is shared.

Students with disabilities are required to wear a mask on the bus if special education transportation is provided per the student's IEP. If a student is unable to wear a mask on the bus and transportation is a part of that student's IEP or 504 plan, the school site team will engage in the interactive process to address the student's needs and reasonable accommodations, which may include mileage reimbursement to families for transportation expenses.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) concluded the following individuals are exempt from wearing a face-covering:

- Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering. This includes persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a face-covering could obstruct breathing or who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance.
- Persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.

The risk of infection is increased for those students in the moderate-severe student population, as the population includes medically fragile students and students with IEPs



and/or Section 504 plans that have underlying health conditions that elevate them to the “higher risk” category for COVID-19 susceptibility, or have behaviors/needs that are near impossible to support

without physical contact. These students are at higher risk of being susceptible to the health impacts of the COVID-19 virus if infected; not only because of their health status but the type of assistance some may require. While the medically fragile population may be exempt from the face-covering mandate, this factor will further increase the students’ own exposure to COVID 19 along with their classmates and District staff.

PROTOCOLS FOR STUDENTS WITH AN IEP OR 504 WHO REQUEST A MASK EXEMPTION

A parent may reach out to the 504/IEP team requesting an exemption with a doctor’s note. An interactive discussion should occur within an IEP meeting:

1. If a parent submits a doctor’s note exempting a student from the face-covering requirement, follow typical protocol:
 - Send a Release of Information (ROI) to parents for the Nurse to contact the doctor
2. Schedule an IEP (purpose: other/review face-covering exemption) to discuss the student’s potential exemption from wearing a face-covering
 - Invite the required team members and include the Nurse
3. During the IEP, review:
 - A medical or mental health condition or disability that precludes the student from wearing a face-covering
 - Nurse’s discussion with the doctor
 - Determine what accommodations can be put in place to allow the student to continue receiving an education safely and without posing a safety risk to others while wearing a face covering. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to:
 - Altering the student’s classroom environment to ensure the student can social distance from others at all times (e.g., turn all desks to face the same direction, space desks 6 or more feet apart, sit students on one side of a table spaced apart instead of facing each other)



- Installing plastic barriers around the student's desk
 - Allowing the use of a face shield with a cloth drape while maintaining social distancing
 - Requiring more frequent sanitization of areas where the student will be
 - Providing periodic or continuous adult monitoring of students unable to self-monitor proper wear of face coverings
 - Developing and implementing behavioral goals for students who resist proper wear of face coverings
 - Providing additional personal protective equipment — in addition to a face covering — to staff who need to be in close proximity to assist the student with personal care or health needs (e.g., respirator, face shield, eye protection, gown, gloves)
- Relocating moderate/severe classrooms to the most ventilated spaces in the building
- Providing separate and/or outdoor learning space whenever possible
- Finally, the school may work towards developing a maskless cohort, if practicable and reasonable

4. The IEP team is responsible for making an appropriate FAPE offer based on the information and accommodations that were reviewed.

A parent may reach out to the IEP team requesting an exemption **without a doctor's note**. An interactive discussion should occur within an IEP meeting:

1. Schedule an IEP (purpose: other/parent request) to discuss the student's potential exemption from wearing a face-covering
 - Invite the required team members and include the nurse
2. During the IEP, review:
 - If the student does not have any record of health ailment that might give rise to a need for an exemption from the face-covering requirement, and there is no apparent reason why the student might need such an exemption, it may be permissible to request a physician's note to verify an exemption.
 - Determine what accommodations can be put in place to allow the student to continue receiving an education safely and without posing a safety risk to others. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to :



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- Altering the student's classroom environment to ensure the student can social distance from others at all times (e.g., turn all desks to face the same direction, space desks 6 or more feet apart, sit students on one side of a table spaced apart instead of facing each other)
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