

Dakota Valley Elementary School

Frequently Asked Questions about Masks



DO YOU EXPECT THE STUDENTS TO WEAR MASKS ALL DAY (YEAR) LONG?

- ✓ No. Both the CDC and the American Pediatric Association identified the need for elementary students to have special consideration when looking at mask requirements.
- ✓ We know that 8 hours is too long, so, the teachers, building administrator, and nurse are prioritizing the times when it is most important for the students to be wearing their masks...this will be different for each classroom and age-level of student in the building.
- ✓ The Dakota Valley School District will continually be using the most recent information from the SD Department of Health and CDC to determine mask usage in the district.

WHEN WILL STUDENTS BE EXPECTED TO WEAR MASKS?

- ✓ Students will wear masks while on the bus both to and from school.
- ✓ During the school day, each classroom will have different needs for mask usage depending on the learning activities and space available (please note, teachers are working to create procedures and spaces that allow students to participate in the best quality learning activities while distanced instead of wearing a mask whenever possible).
- ✓ Students will wear their masks throughout the day when they are not able to social distance (some *possible* times would be when walking through the hallways, during small group learning, one-on-one conversations with partners or small groups, playing learning games in the classroom with a partner sitting close, etc.).
- ✓ Students will not be wearing masks at recess or P.E. unless they choose to/have been instructed by their parents to, or, are playing a non-strenuous game close to other students (for example, drawing with sidewalk chalk on the playground within 6 feet of another student).

WHAT IF MY CHILD FORGETS HIS/HER MASK AT HOME & WHERE ARE THEY KEEPING THEIR MASKS AT SCHOOL?

- ✓ The DV School District will have disposable masks available if a child is without a mask, or, if at some point during the day the child's own mask becomes soiled and needs to be interchanged for a clean one.
- ✓ Our students *will not* be sent home from school if they do not have a mask at any given time.
- ✓ At school, each student will have a school-provided lanyard with a clip that will hold the student's mask. This ensures that the masks are available to the child at any time, and, will not be left laying around for anyone to touch or interact with.
- ✓ If a student arrives at the bus in the morning without his/her mask, the driver will have disposable masks available for the child to take.



WILL STUDENTS EVEN KNOW HOW TO WEAR A MASK PROPERLY?

- ✓ Because of the age of the students in the elementary building, the DVES teachers and staff will be continuously educating students on how to properly wear their mask (how to put the mask on safely, what to do once it is on, how to take it off, etc.).
- ✓ Hand sanitizer will be available, and, students will be washing their hands several times each day to help mitigate the germ spread from taking masks off and on throughout the day.

WHERE DO WE GET MASKS AND WHICH KIND?

- ✓ We are asking that families provide a cloth face covering for each of their children each day, and, keep it clean just as they would clothing.
- ✓ The brand of mask is not critical, but, parents/guardians should look for masks that are more than one-layer thick, *if possible*.
- ✓ The mask should fit the child's face well, cover from chin to over the nose.
- ✓ Some students may find that having an adjustable mask is more comfortable through the day than a single size, but that is not required for anyone.
- ✓ The district will provide one mask for each elementary student that has a clear shield across the mouth for use when doing close, small group work. This mask will stay at school each day and will be cleaned each evening. These masks can be worn each time a child is asked to wear a mask, however, they are less comfortable to breathe through for an extended time period, so, they will be used sparingly and interchanged with the child's own cloth mask whenever possible.

WHAT IF I DON'T THINK MY CHILD WILL WEAR A MASK OR CAN'T WEAR A MASK BECAUSE OF A MEDICAL REASON?

- ✓ If your child is resistant to wearing a mask but is fully able to without any medical reasons, there are a few things that are suggested to help children get used to wearing them:
 - Have your child pick out a fun pattern or character mask to get them excited about their new mask.
 - Have your child practice wearing the mask for short intervals throughout the day.
 - Talk with your child about the reason why we are wearing masks at school and other places.
- ✓ If you have done some of the things above, but you still think your child will fight it, many times in a structured school setting when he/she sees classmates and teachers wearing theirs, it won't seem like such a big deal. If it continues to be a problem, we will work individually with families, then.
- ✓ If your child's physician has recommended that they don't wear a mask for medical reasons, our nurse would need an exemption, or note, signed by the physician explaining this.