



# Muscle Shoals City Schools

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*"Providing opportunities for all students to obtain wisdom and achieve their greatest potential!"*

*Dr. Chad Holden*  
Superintendent

*Dr. Denise Woods*  
Assistant Superintendent

August 10, 2021

Dear Muscle Shoals City Schools families,

This morning, the Muscle Shoals Board of Education met in a special-called meeting to consider changes to our COVID-19 mitigation plans. Specifically, the changes considered related to school procedures for universal masking. Universal masking in schools has been widely recommended by local physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, CDC, and ADPH.

Based on the most current data from our own school nurses, state and local health officials, including pediatricians and primary care physicians that we all see every day here in the Shoals, COVID-19 is surging – particularly the Delta variant - and we must take additional measures to keep our students and staff **safe** and **in school**.

Universal masking means contact tracing will **only be necessary in certain situations** when an exposure occurs. This means our **students can remain at school** provided they do not exhibit symptoms. Please monitor students for symptoms and keep them at home when sick.

We certainly recommend eligible people (12 and up) take the safe, effective, and readily available COVID-19 vaccine, as it is the best weapon we have against the coronavirus. Masks are a tool to slow the spread of the virus in crowded situations where 6 feet cannot be maintained in all situations – which is the case on school campuses. With children under 12 not being eligible for the vaccine and the rate at which doctors are seeing children display symptoms of COVID-19, we believe this is the best course of action at this time.

The Board of Education approved today new requirements related to universal masking, which **will expire on Tuesday, September 14 unless otherwise continued by the Board**.

Our sincere hope is that the **masking requirement** is temporary and that we can return to **masks preferred** in the near future. We will monitor the COVID cases both in our schools and in our community to make decisions in the days ahead.

We thank you for your understanding, cooperation, and flexibility as we navigate this pandemic.

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**MUSCLE SHOALS CITY SCHOOLS**  
**FY2021-22 Covid-19 Mitigation Procedure on Masking**

**Procedures for Students**

1. **Face Masks.** Face masks which cover the nose and mouth are to be worn in the following circumstances:
  - a. ***Inside MSCS Facilities.*** Face masks, which cover the nose and mouth, are to be worn by everyone inside any MSCS facility, regardless of vaccination status, **when within 6 feet of a person from another household.** This requirement also applies to any indoor MSCS activity or event, including Muscle Shoals City Board of Education meetings.
  - b. ***Traveling on School Bus or Any MSCS Vehicle.*** Face masks, which cover the nose and mouth, are to be worn by everyone while traveling on any MSCS school bus or vehicle regardless of vaccination status. This provision is intended to comply with CDC Order, authorized by 42 U.S.C. 264(a) and 42 C.F.R. 70.2, 71.31(b), and 71.32(b).
2. **Exceptions.** Face masks are not required in the following circumstances:
  - a. ***Infants.*** Face masks shall not be required for individuals younger than two (2) years of age.
  - b. ***Strenuous Physical Activity.*** Face masks shall not be required for any student while engaged in strenuous physical activity. When a student is not participating in such an event, he or she should wear a face covering.
  - c. ***Exigent Circumstances.*** A face covering will not be required if a student is: experiencing acute difficulty breathing; unconscious or incapacitated; receiving healthcare where it is necessary to remove the face covering; or is personally unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
  - d. ***Medical Exemptions.***
    - i. If a family believes which their student requires an exemption to this procedure based on a medical, physical, or psychological contraindication, the family should reach out to their student's principal.
    - ii. MSCS may require documentation from a licensed healthcare provider before granting an exemption, and it is ultimately MSCS' determination – and not the outside licensed healthcare providers – as to whether a student's medical condition justifies an exemption.
    - iii. Given the number of masking exemption requests MSCS may receive, it may take several days before MSCS can review a particular request for an exemption and to determine whether any such exemption is warranted.
2. **Questions.** If a family or student is unwilling to comply with this procedure, the school principal will attempt to contact the student's family to discuss possible alternatives to in-person instruction.
3. **Enforcement.**
  - a. ***Student Discipline.***
    - i. ***Misplaced or Forgotten Mask.*** MSCS will not punish students for failing to bring a mask to school or for misplacing their masks or for forgetting to bring a mask with them to school. Each school will have spare masks for students.
    - ii. ***Defiance.*** *If a student is defiant for refusing to wear a mask, the student will be subject to the applicable consequences and interventions from the MSCS Code of Conduct.*
    - iii. ***Alabama State Law 16-1-24.1*** states that parents are required to compel the child to properly conduct himself/herself in accordance with the polices, procedures, rules, and regulations of behavior adopted by the system and the local school.

- a. **Notice.** The information in this newsletter and the MSCS webpage serve as notice to you of MSCS' policies and procedures regarding COVID-19 mitigation procedures.
2. **Updates.**
  - a. **Amendments.** The Superintendent, or his designee, will develop, and amend as necessary, these procedures based on current guidance from local and state government and health officials.
  - b. **Notice.**
    - i. The Superintendent, or his designee, will ensure that this information is updated to reflect the latest version of the COVID-19 mitigation procedures.
    - ii. The Superintendent, or his designee, will update the Board of Education when making major changes to these procedures.
    - iii. The Superintendent, or his designee, will send updates to MSCS families using typical methods of communication (e.g., robo-calls, e-mails, website, etc.) when making major changes to these procedures.

**Effective Date:** August 11, 2021

**Expiration Date:** September 14, 2021

### **Procedure for Parents, Guardians, and Visitors to MSCS Facilities**

1. **Face Masks.** Face masks which cover the nose and mouth are to be worn in the following circumstances:
  - a. **Inside MSCS Facilities.** Face masks, which cover the nose and mouth, are to be worn by everyone inside any MSCS facility, regardless of vaccination status, **when within 6 feet of a person from another household.** This requirement also applies to any indoor MSCS activity or event, including Muscle Shoals City Board of Education meetings.
  - b. **Traveling on School Bus or Any MSCS Vehicle.** Face masks, which cover the nose and mouth, are to be worn by everyone while traveling on any MSCS school bus or vehicle regardless of vaccination status. This provision is intended to comply with CDC Order, authorized by 42 U.S.C. 264(a) and 42 C.F.R. 70.2, 71.31(b), and 71.32(b).
2. **Exceptions.** Face masks are not required in the following circumstances:
  - a. **Infants.** Face masks shall not be required for individuals younger than two (2) years of age.
  - b. **Exigent Circumstances.** A face covering will not be required if a parent, guardian, or visitor is: experiencing acute difficulty breathing; unconscious or incapacitated; receiving healthcare where it is necessary to remove the face covering; or is personally unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
3. **Questions.** If a parent, guardian, or visitor is unwilling or unable to comply with this procedure, he or she should reach out to the school principal to discuss possible alternatives (such as communication through telephone or Zoom). If seeking some type of exemption from this procedure, the school principal or other MSCS employee may ask you for additional information to determine whether appropriate accommodations can be made.
4. **Updates.**
  - a. **Amendments.** The Superintendent, and his designees, will develop, and amend as necessary, these procedures based on current guidance from local and state government and health officials.
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### Procedures for Employees

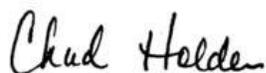
1. **Inside MSCS Facilities.** Face masks or face shields (depending on distance), which cover the nose and mouth, are to be worn by everyone inside any MSCS facility, regardless of vaccination status, **when within 6 feet of a person from another household.** This requirement also applies to any indoor MSCS activity or event, including Muscle Shoals City Board of Education meetings.
2. **Traveling on School Bus or Any MSCS Vehicle.** Face masks, which cover the nose and mouth, are to be worn by everyone while traveling on any MSCS school bus or vehicle regardless of vaccination status. This provision is intended to comply with CDC Order, authorized by 42 U.S.C. 264(a) and 42 C.F.R. 70.2, 71.31(b), and 71.32(b).
3. **Exceptions.** Face masks are not required in the following circumstances:
  - a. **Exigent Circumstances.** A face covering will not be required if an employee is: experiencing acute difficulty breathing; unconscious or incapacitated; receiving healthcare where it is necessary to remove the face covering; or is personally unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
  - b. **Strenuous Activities.** Face masks shall not be required for any employee while engaged in strenuous physical activity. When not participating in such an event, employees shall wear a face covering.
  - c. **Disability Accommodations.** If an employee requires a reasonable accommodation to perform the essential functions of his/her job which would impact his/her ability to wear face covering as required by these procedures, the employee must reach out to /her supervisor to seek such exception. The employee's supervisor and relevant MSCS administrative personnel will engage in the interactive process to determine whether the request accommodation is reasonable.
  - d. **Practical necessity and essential job function.**
4. **Questions.** If an employee is unable to comply with this procedure, he or she should contact his/her supervisor to discuss possible alternatives.
5. **Enforcement.**
  - a. **5.1 Employee Qualifications and Duties:** Employees are required to perform the duties and responsibilities that are assigned to them by the Board, the Superintendent, or their supervisor(s) or their designees. Such duties and assignments may extend beyond or outside the instructional day and may include off-campus functions, events, and activities
6. **Updates.**
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Sincerely,



Dr. Chad Holden  
Superintendent