

MASKS

What is Public Health’s advisory on wearing of face masks and how do schools support their proper use in K-12 settings?

Masks are one of many layers of protection we use to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Wearing a mask should be combined with other important protective measures such as getting all eligible doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, frequent hand washing, and avoiding crowded spaces. [Masks are most effective when fitted, worn, and handled correctly](#). They act as a barrier and help stop the spread of droplets from a person’s mouth and nose when talking, laughing, yelling, singing, coughing, or sneezing.

All K to 12 students, staff and visitors are required to wear masks in all indoor areas, including at desks and on school buses. [Exceptions](#) to the mask policy apply. For example, some people cannot wear a mask because they cannot put on or remove a mask on their own or for psychological, behavioural or health conditions. School administrators, teachers, and support staff continue to support student mask wearing through positive and inclusive approaches and will work with students to foster proper mask usage including how to wear, take off, and store masks. School communities are reminded to be respectful of people who can't wear a mask and to implement mask exemption strategies described in the [K-12 COVID-19 Planning resource – mask exemptions](#).

Why are N95 masks not advised for K-12 settings?

Prevention measures already in place in schools continue to be effective at reducing the risk of COVID-19 spreading. In-school transmission is rare, typically accounting for approximately 1% of COVID-19 cases. Unfortunately, most COVID-19 transmission occurs in households and social networks where masks are not typically worn.

Non-medical masks are recommended while at school as per the provincial [Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#). N95 masks are not currently required. Masks used at school should be at least 3 layers, fit well, and be of good quality. The best mask is one that is worn consistently and correctly. For more information, refer to [Types of masks](#) and [How to Wear a Face Mask](#)

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