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## **Use of Face Shields Not Appropriate Substitute for Masks**

*Schoolwide use of face shields does not meet requirement of state's K-12 masking order*

COLUMBUS – As schools get ready to start the 2020-21 academic year, the Ohio Department of Health is following federal guidance and prohibiting the schoolwide use of face shields as a substitute for facial coverings/masks. Such use of face shields does not comply with the [Director's Order Requiring the Use of Facial Coverings in Child Education Settings](#).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends against using face shields as a substitute for facial coverings or masks.

The use of masks or face coverings is intended to reduce the spray of respiratory droplets from the wearer into the environment, onto another person, or onto a surface. The mask or cloth face covering should cover the nose, mouth, and chin with little to no gap.

According to the [CDC](#), "At this time, it is not known what level of protection a face shield provides to people nearby from the spray of respiratory droplets from the wearer. There is currently not enough evidence to support the effectiveness of face shields for source control. Therefore, CDC does not currently recommend use of face shields as a substitute for masks."

Ohio's K-12 masking order states that "all students, faculty, and staff in any child care setting, school building, or other location that provides care or education to any child in kindergarten through grade twelve in the State of Ohio shall wear facial coverings at all times." There are exemptions, including, but not limited to, individuals with medical conditions, when eating or drinking, and when playing at recess. The full list of exemptions is available in the order.

If an individual meets an exception to the K-12 face covering requirement, a face shield may be an option. According to the CDC, it is understood that some circumstances, such as the need for lip reading, require an alternative to masks. In those instances, a face shield should originate at the forehead with no gap, wrap around the sides of the face, and extend below the chin. When unable to use a mask, increased attention to other measures such as social distancing is imperative.

For more information, visit [coronavirus.ohio.gov](http://coronavirus.ohio.gov).

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