

Does my CPS student have to wear a mask at school?

Guide to CPS Masking Requirements for School Year 2021-2022

LEGAL COUNCIL
FOR HEALTH JUSTICE

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CPS Mask Requirements



The Illinois guidance on mask wearing, jointly created by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), **requires every person over the age of two to wear a mask when inside school buildings**, regardless of vaccination status. This includes all Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students, staff, and visitors.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if my child cannot tolerate wearing a face mask?

There are **very limited exceptions** to the mask mandate. Exceptions include students who would not be able to remove a mask by themselves in an emergency and students who have difficulty breathing. Most students with IEPs or 504 plans will be expected to wear masks.

If you believe your child cannot wear a mask due to their disability, you should **ask for a face covering accommodation**. CPS has a request form included below. Your child's physician needs to fill out the second part **explaining the medical condition that justifies an accommodation**. A school nurse must review the request before any decision is made.

What if my child refuses to wear a mask and is not given an accommodation?

The CPS guidance on mask wearing included below states that schools should take **an approach with students of encouragement and gradual acceptance**. A number of social stories and videos to teach children about the importance of masking, as well as tips for parents, are available in this guidance.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

You can also request a **Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)** if your child refuses to wear a mask. A BIP is a common tool that schools use to address behavioral issues where **one behavior is targeted**. In this case, **the behavior would be mask-wearing**. The BIP includes information on **why** the student resists wearing a mask and **what** non-disciplinary measures could be taken to encourage mask-wearing. The BIP also identifies the adults who will be responsible for helping the child adjust their behavior.

Discipline

Students who **continuously refuse to wear masks** will be **violating the CPS Student Code of Conduct**. The guidance states that schools must try every possible strategy to correct the behavior before considering suspension; however, suspension is still possible.

If your student has a disability, they have specific rights regarding disciplinary action. Any time suspension totals more than ten days in a school year, the school must conduct a **Manifestation Determination Review (MDR)** for any student with a documented or suspected disability. If your student's conduct is determined to be **a result of their disability**, your student must be provided with a **new behavior plan** and be **allowed to attend school**. One of the only exceptions to this is when the student's behavior is a danger to themselves or others. Unfortunately, we do not yet know how this will play out with COVID.

Additional Resources

CPS Masking Guidelines:

bit.ly/CPSMask



ISBE Masking Guidelines:

bit.ly/ISBEMask



Mask Accommodation Form:

bit.ly/CFCRequest

