

PCPS Updates Face Coverings Requirement to Reflect CDC Changes

Polk County Public Schools has made two changes to its face covering requirement to reflect an update from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

The CDC's face covering recommendations, which were last updated in November, can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>.

In keeping with the CDC's recommendations, PCPS will continue to allow gaiters. However, the CDC specifies that gaiters should be made of double-layered material.

"We're asking our students, staff members and campus visitors, who choose to wear gaiters, to ensure they are made of double-layered material," said Deputy Superintendent John Hill.

"If the gaiter is made of only one layer of material, the gaiter must be folded over to create two layers, while taking care to cover both your nose and mouth. Our school administrators will be reminding students to double their gaiters. This simple step can go a long way in protecting us all from the spread of coronavirus."

Additionally, students and staff members may not wear masks with ports, as the CDC advises these designs can allow virus particles to escape.

Principals will be advised of the updates to the district's face covering requirements this week and will begin implementing the new requirements on their campuses.

"We are going to work closely with our students and families to communicate these changes and assist them in any way we can in selecting appropriate face coverings to ensure the safety of our school communities," Hill said.

Face coverings continue to be required by students in grades K-12 as well as staff members.

In July, the School Board adopted the following language as part of Code of Student Conduct:

Face Covering – GRADES K-12 (During any times when the wearing of a face covering is required by the District)

Students must wear a face covering that covers both the nose and mouth and fits snugly against the sides of a person's face with little or no gaps at all times to ensure their own safety and the safety of other students and staff. Students must wear the face covering at all times when on school grounds or district-provided transportation, unless the student is involved in an approved activity when a face covering would not be appropriate. All face coverings must comply with general dress code and school uniform requirements.