



FACE COVERING POLICY¹

Purpose:

The Board of La Tierra Community School (the Board) recognizes that our students have the right to a safe return to in-person instruction with limited disruption. Our school must be able to protect the health and safety of students and educators, and ensure our families have confidence that their school is doing everything possible to keep students healthy and in school. The Board further wishes to limit school closures and/or class quarantines, which negatively affect the wellbeing of our students and families, and interfere with our duty, under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, to provide a free, appropriate public education (known as FAPE).² As stated by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "the educational gaps that existed before the pandemic—in access, opportunities, achievement, and outcomes—are widening."³ The culture of La Tierra Community School has always been student centric with a focus on community and inclusion. The Board recognizes that it is imperative to the success of our students that we remain committed to our Vision and Mission by "working together to nurture the whole child and inspire passion for learning" as well as maintaining our "commitment to social and environmental justice".⁴

In light of the high rate of transmission in our community among vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, the increased incidence of quarantine of our classes due to COVID-19 close contacts, and the guidance issued to our school by the Yavapai County Community Health Services Agency⁵ and CDC⁶, as well as the direction issued to Arizona educators by the U.S. Secretary of Education on August, 18, 2021,⁷ the Board hereby directs school leadership to enforce the following safety measures, which include a mask mandate for all students, staff, parents, and visitors while on campus or participating in school sanctioned activities off campus effective Monday, August 23, 2021. The Board will continue to monitor health conditions and may change the policy if conditions indicate that it should be reevaluated.

Policy:

All students, staff, parents, and visitors are required to wear a face covering while on campus.* This includes while in the classroom, in the office and in transition from the classroom to the lunch area, playground, bathroom and anywhere else students travel on campus. Students will NOT be required to wear masks on the playground and at lunch/snack. Masks will be required for all people on campus regardless of vaccination status.

¹ Revised 8/20/2021

² <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/centers-offices/civil-rights-center/statutes/section-504-rehabilitation-act-of-1973>

³ [The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America's Students](#)

⁴ <https://latierracomunityschool.org/about-la-tierra/>

⁵ <https://yavapaiaz.gov/chs/COVID-19/School-Guidance>

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>

⁷ <https://www.azed.gov/sites/default/files/2021/08/21-006970%20Letter%20from%20Secretary%20Cardona%20Arizona%20final%20signed.pdf>

Face Covering Definition:

Face coverings refer to a piece of material used to cover the nose and mouth. A face covering must cover both the nose and mouth.

Face Covering Use:

- Masks should fit snugly over the nose and mouth. If the mask gapes open, it is not working effectively.
- Individuals who should not wear masks include children under the age of two, people who cannot remove a mask on their own, and people who have significant difficulty breathing related to a medical condition.
- Students and staff should refrain from touching and adjusting the mask as much as possible, and should wash or sanitize hands after touching or adjusting a mask.
- Face coverings should follow school dress code guidelines and should not be distracting to the educational process and climate of the school, offensive, or inappropriate for school.
- Masks with exhalation valves or vents allow respiratory droplets to reach others and potentially spread the virus. These masks should be avoided.
- Masks should be washed after each use.
- Masks should include multiple layers of fabric (usually natural fibers) while allowing for breathing without restriction. (You should not be able to blow a candle out when blowing through the mask.) Studies show that gaiter-type masks are usually ineffective

Additional Information:

Face coverings should contain student and staff initials. Students and staff may not share face coverings. Additional disposable face coverings are available in the office for emergency use.

*LTCS recognizes that wearing cloth face coverings may not be possible in every situation or for some people. In some situations, wearing a cloth face covering may exacerbate a physical or mental health condition, lead to a medical emergency, or introduce significant safety concerns. Adaptations and alternatives should be considered whenever possible to increase the feasibility of wearing a cloth face covering or to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading if it is not possible to wear one.