

## Great Hearts Texas Face Covering Policy

July 17, 2020

Governor Abbott's executive order and the Texas Education Agency's subsequent guidance documents have mandated that all persons ten years of age and older must wear a face covering over the nose and mouth when inside [the school building], or when in an outdoor public space, wherever it is not feasible to maintain six feet of social distancing....” Throughout this policy, the term “face covering” includes non-medical grade disposable face masks, cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth), and full-face shields that protect eyes, nose, and mouth. TEA health guidance notes that “[f]ace shields may be superior to cloth face coverings in many circumstances, given improved ability to see mouth movements and improved air circulation.”

For students under the age of ten, we recognize the need for developmentally appropriate layers of safety measures. Our comprehensive approach includes the required use of face coverings at defined times, other measures such as desk shields, and high responsiveness to symptomatic individuals and those who have had close contact with a confirmed positive person.

We understand that students cannot be expected to wear a mask without breaks for 7 hours a day, especially our youngest students; therefore, we have developed a face covering policy that submits itself to TEA guidance and authoritative ordinance while affording students safe and reasonable space to be mask free.

We are supplying our faculty with face shields for the year ahead to allow them maximum flexibility in maintaining their health while being able to teach effectively.

The mask policy is as follows:

### **Students in Grades 4 through 12, Faculty and Staff**

Students in grades 4 through 12 who are attending school in the building, and all faculty and staff members who are working in the building, are required to wear a face covering (as defined by the TEA) at all times, from drop off until pick up with the following exceptions:

Face Coverings may be removed for lunch, designated activities in PE, and socially distanced activities outside such as recess and short additional breaks scheduled at the campus level this year for each section of students. Travel from room to room is not exempt: face coverings are to be worn while moving throughout the building.

Face Coverings, as defined by the TEA, are either “...non-medical grade disposable face masks, cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth), or full-face shields to protect eyes, nose, and mouth.”

Face Coverings may be solid color or patterned but must be without visual reference to elements of popular culture including brand logos.

## Students in Grades 4 through 12

- **Drop Off** – Face Covering required.
- **Hallways** – Face Covering required.
- **Classroom** – Face Covering required.
- **Lunch** – Social distancing will be implemented. No Face Covering requirement while seated and eating. Face Covering required when walking to the lunchroom and within the lunchroom.
- **Playground** (Lower School Students) – Hand washing or sanitizer before and after playground. Face Covering may be removed when social distancing is maintained.
- **Pick Up** – Face Covering required.

## All Faculty and Staff

- **Drop Off** – Face Covering required.
- **Hallways** – Face Covering required.
- **Classroom** – Face Covering required.
- **Faculty Room & Lounge** – Social distancing will be implemented. No Face Covering requirement while seated and eating. Face Covering required when walking to faculty spaces and within them.
- **Lunch Duty** – Face Covering required.
- **Pick Up** – Face Covering required.

## Kindergarten through Grade 3

Students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 are under the same requirements as grades 4 - 12, with the additional exception that they may remove their Face Covering when seated at their desks. Every Desk in these grade levels will be outfitted with a three-sided, clear Desk Shield.

- **K-3 Classrooms** – Face Coverings may be taken off while seated at desk. Desk Shields installed for extra safety.

Note: Individual cases and unique circumstances will be vetted by academy leadership on a case-by-case basis.

### **POLICY SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

*Great Hearts Texas will evaluate this policy every quarter, or as needed, to determine if our schools are following the appropriate level of safety measures, meaning that requirements may ease or tighten throughout the 2020-21 academic year. These routine evaluations will also ensure our schools remain up to date and in compliance with local public health and safety protocols. Guardians will be notified of any changes to this policy.*