



WRANGELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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AK Smart Start 2020 PPE guidelines

Smart Start Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Guidance

Background

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is designed to protect the wearer and/or those nearby from the spread of illness-causing germs such as SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19). The need for PPE and the type of PPE needed varies by situation and it is important to thoughtfully and correctly utilize these often limited resources.

Intent of Guidance

These are general guidelines and are not comprehensive. They are not a substitute for any existing employee health policies, or for safety and health-related requirements such as those mandated by OSHA or other regulatory agencies. It is important to remember that the use of PPE is only one tool in an overall COVID-19 mitigation plan.

General principles for reducing COVID-19 transmission:

- **Maintain physical distancing by minimizing close contact (<6 feet) with other people**
- **Conduct all activities in small cohort groups that remain together with minimal mixing of groups**
- **Outdoor activities are generally safer than indoor activities**
- **Wash hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer frequently**
- **Use personal protective equipment (face coverings, face shields, etc.)**
- **Regularly clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces**
- **Isolate sick people and quarantine exposed people**

PPE types mentioned in this guidance:

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cloth face covering  | | Medical Mask  | N95 Respirator  |
| Face Shield  | Eye Protection  | Gloves  | Gown  |

Guidance for Use of PPE in Alaska School Settings

All situations

- **Everyone (teachers, staff, bus drivers, students, visitors)** is strongly recommended to wear a **cloth face covering** at all times per CDC guidance, if feasible, while at school or in shared transportation. It is especially recommended in situations in which physical distancing (>6 feet apart) cannot be maintained. Districts may mandate the use of face coverings in a building.
 - Exceptions: face coverings should **not** be worn by:
 - children under age 2
 - anyone with difficulty breathing or confusion
 - anyone who is sleeping or unconscious
 - anyone who cannot remove the face covering without assistance
 - anyone with a medical condition that makes them unable to safely do so
 - Information should be provided to all staff and families on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings. CDC has helpful [guidance](#) on this.
 - A clear plastic **face shield-mask combination** that extends from the forehead to the chin and wraps around the sides of the face, and also has a droplet guard at the bottom, may be an acceptable substitute for a cloth face covering. A face shield also functions as eye protection and allows others to see facial expressions

and lip movements more clearly, while the droplet guard may reduce the amount of respiratory droplets in circulation.



- **Food service and custodial staff:**

- **cloth face covering, gloves**
- Custodial staff should use other PPE as appropriate based on routine health and safety policies.

Situations requiring close contact (within 6 feet for 15 or more minutes)

- **Staff performing duties involving close or physical contact with students** (e.g., physical therapy, toileting assistance) should consider using:
 - **Cloth face covering and/or face shield**
 - **Eye protection, gown, and gloves as appropriate** (i.e., if exposure to bodily fluids is likely)
 - Hand hygiene should be performed before and after any contact
- **Situations with increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 and/or respiratory secretions**
 - **School nurse, medical personnel, or other staff who are involved with providing medical care** should consider:
 - Following **Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions** per routine policies
 - Use of a **medical mask** during all patient care encounters for source control
 - Use of **medical mask plus eye protection** during all patient care encounters if there is moderate-substantial COVID-19 transmission in the community.
 - Use of **full COVID-19-specific PPE (medical mask or N95 respirator*, eye protection, gown, gloves)** when providing medical care for an individual who has [symptoms](#) compatible with COVID-19

***Notes:**

- A **medical mask** (rather than an N95 respirator) should provide an acceptable level of protection for medical staff in most school settings.
- N95 or equivalent respirators are a limited resource nationwide and should **only** be used if adequate supplies are available and they are part of an overall respiratory protection plan that includes [regular fit-testing](#) of staff that will use them
- Potential aerosol-generating medical procedures which pose a higher risk of COVID-19 transmission (e.g., open suctioning, nebulizer treatments, etc.) should be avoided in school settings during the COVID-19 pandemic to the extent possible. If such procedures must be performed, full COVID-19 PPE **including fit-tested N95 respirator** should be utilized by staff performing them.

- **Situation in which a student or staff member becomes ill**
 - A student or staff member who is identified to have possible COVID-19 symptoms should immediately put on a **medical mask** to help prevent further transmission. Anyone who is accompanying them should also wear a **medical mask**.
 - Staff involved in caring for a child who has developed symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, for example while waiting for a parent to arrive to pick them up, should wear a **medical mask and eye protection**. If they are within 6 feet of the child, they should also wear a **gown and gloves**.

- **Other considerations**
 - If used, gloves and gowns should be changed between students and face shields should be disinfected and cleaned, for example with an antiviral wipe.
 - Any staff member who may need to use PPE other than a cloth face covering should receive training on taking off PPE without contaminating themselves, for example by viewing this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCzwH7d4Ags>.
 - Staff who regularly interface with students requiring increased PPE may want to consider having an easily washed set or sets of clothing that they change into when they arrive at work and change out of before leaving work. Clothing that becomes soiled while at work should be changed.
 - Staff who have close contact with students with potential for bodily fluid exposure may want to wear a washable head covering (such as a scrub cap) as face shields typically do not prevent secretions from contacting hair when bending over. Clothing and head coverings should be washed after each work day.
 - Some staff may also want to designate a set of shoes for work.

- **Further resources**
 - Free refresher course for school nurses on PPE (includes CME) <https://catalog.icrsncsbn.org/>
 - CDC instructions for using PPE <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/using-ppe.html>
 - CDC flyer for using PPE when COVID-19 is suspected (good to post in nurse's office) https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/A_FS_HCP_COVID19_PPE.pdf
 - CDC strategies on optimizing PPE supply <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html>