

## **Wyalusing Area School District Face Mask Exceptions Information**

The PA Department of Health has provided as part of their September 7, 2021 Secretary of Health Order, Section 3 entitled **Exceptions to Covering Requirement**. Specifically, the Order states the following:

All alternatives to a face covering, including the use of a face shield, should be exhausted before an individual is excepted from this Order.

- A. If wearing a face covering while working would create an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.
- B. If wearing a face covering would either cause a medical condition, or exacerbate an existing one, including respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition or a disability
- C. When necessary to confirm the individual's identity.
- D. When working alone and isolated from interaction with other people with little or no expectation of in-person interaction.
- E. If an individual is communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired or has another disability, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- F. When the individual is under two (2) years of age.
- G. When an individual is:
  - 1. Engaged in an activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating and drinking, or playing an instrument that would be obstructed by the face covering; or
  - 2. Participating in high intensity aerobic or anerobic activities, including during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals.
- H. When a child/student is participating in a sports practice activity or event, whether indoors or outdoors.

### **Process & Requirements Steps**

- 1. The student provides a note to the Main Office/Principal from their medical provider, which must be an MD, DO, NP, or PA, which documents a medical condition that would be caused or exacerbated by wearing a face mask OR provides data related to a medical condition that raises a concern related to wearing a mask.
- 2. The district is required by law to determine along with the parent/guardian what disability, if any, exists that exempts a student from the face mask requirement.
  - a. If there is a disability, the district is required by law to determine along with the parent/guardian, if that disability requires engagement in the Interactive Process consistent with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).
  - b. As part of the Interactive Process, the District is required by ADA law to determine what, if any, additional accommodations may also be necessary beyond the face mask exception.

- i. If the District and parent/guardian determine that there is no additional accommodation necessary beyond the mask exception then a 504 plan is not necessary.
    - ii. If the District and parent/guardian determine that there is a need for an accommodation beyond the face mask exception, then a 504-plan meeting would be initiated by the School Guidance Counselor. A 504-planning meeting would occur with the District and the parent/guardian to finalize the necessary accommodations and implementation of the 504 plan.
3. The Order then requires the student to wear a Face Shield as an alternative to the Face Mask.
  - a. If the student requests an exception from wearing a face shield, the student provides a note to the Main Office/Principal from their medical provider, which must be an MD, DO, NP, or PA, which documents what purported medical condition exists that prevents the student from wearing a face shield.
  - b. Depending upon the medical condition identified by the medical provider, the student, parent/guardian, and the District may need to engage in the Interactive Process consistent with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), consistent with #2 above.
  - c. If a face shield exemption is granted, then a student may be have an exception from this Order.