

POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

SUBJECT	N.E.P.N. CODE
SAFE WORK & LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: MANDATORY MASK USAGE	GBGBB / JLIH

I. POLICY

The Louis Riel School Board is committed to upholding its statutory obligations to provide a safe environment to all students who attend our schools, all employees who work in our facilities, and all those who visit or volunteer in our facilities (Public Schools Act 41(1); Workplace Safety and Health Act 4(1) & 4(2)).

This policy is one component of a comprehensive [pandemic response plan](#) that aims to:

- ensure a successful return to in-school learning, uninterrupted by COVID-19 outbreaks;
- reduce transmission of COVID-19 in Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) schools and facilities; and
- mitigate the risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes among individuals in our schools, particularly those individuals who are unable to be vaccinated due to legitimate medical or religious reasons or for whom vaccines are not currently approved, notably children born after December 31, 2009.

Manitoba Public Health Orders [announced](#) on August 24, 2021, require the use of masks in indoor public places, including schools. To comply with these orders and in light of the stated preference of LRSD employee groups (including the Manitoba Teachers' Society), mandates announced by other sectors—including other educational authorities—and the informal feedback from staff and the community, the Board mandates the use of masks by all staff, students and visitors in its kindergarten to Grade 12 schools and facilities, including school buses, for the commencement of the 2021-2022 school year, subject to the **GUIDELINES** and **PROCEDURES** below. For further details related to the mask mandate, including off-site usage, refer to LRSD's comprehensive [pandemic response plan](#).

II. GUIDELINES

- Masks will be mandatory for all staff, students (K-12), and visitors in LRSD schools and facilities, including school buses, for the 2021-2022 school year.
- Accommodations and/or exemptions to mask usage, including those for students with additional needs, will apply in specific situations as set out below and/or as articulated by Manitoba Education: [Protecting Manitobans – Guidance for Mask Exemptions in Schools](#). All individuals requesting accommodation must participate in the accommodation process and provide reasonable and necessary information requested by LRSD related to the accommodation request, failing which LRSD may be unable to provide any accommodation.

Adopted:	<i>First Reading – August 24, 2021 2nd & 3rd Reading – Sept. 7, 2021</i>	Legal References: Public Schools Act (Manitoba) 41(1) Workplace Safety and Health Act (Manitoba) 4(1) & 4(2)
Revised:		

- C. This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis throughout the 2021-2022 school year and will be revised or rescinded, as Public Health orders and/or conditions warrant.

III. PROCEDURES

- A. School Principals and Supervisors will oversee implementation of the policy, including educating students, staff and community on related public health fundamentals to prevent the spread of COVID-19, namely:
- a. self-screening and staying home when sick
 - b. practising proper hand hygiene (hand washing or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer), cough etiquette, and physical distancing
 - c. wearing a mask
 - d. becoming fully vaccinated against COVID-19
 - e. monitoring and improving ventilation where necessary
- B. Disposable, medical-grade masks will be made available to staff, students, and visitors. As recommended by the [Province of Manitoba](#) “those provided with PPE [personal protective equipment] should wear it instead of a non-medical mask”. Therefore, the use of reusable cloth masks is discouraged.
- C. Where an accommodation is requested due to a medical condition which prevents a student from wearing a mask, parents/guardians must complete the Initial Intake Form – Mask Wearing Limitations for LRSD Schools and submit it to the School Principal for processing. A medical note must accompany the Initial Intake Form and be submitted to the Principal and shall include the restrictions and/or limitations for which the accommodation is sought. All such requests will be reviewed by the Student Services Department. The Student Services Department may request additional information or documentation as part of the review process. An individual who is not satisfied with the decision rendered by the Student Services Department may submit an appeal in writing to the Superintendent. The Superintendent may request additional information or documentation as part of their review.
- D. Where an accommodation is requested due to a medical condition which prevents an employee from wearing a mask, the employee must submit a request for accommodation in writing to their Principal or Supervisor, along with supporting documentation from a physician, which shall include the restrictions and/or limitations for which the accommodation is sought. All such requests will be reviewed by the Staff Services Department. The Staff Services Department may request additional information or documentation as part of the review process. An employee who is not satisfied with the decision rendered by the Staff Services Department may submit an appeal in writing to the Superintendent. The Superintendent may request additional information or documentation as part of their review. During the process of application and appeal, the Division may take interim measures, keeping in mind the intent of this Policy, including but not limited to unpaid leave.

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Revised:		

- E. Students and staff who are eligible for an accommodation in accordance with this Policy and are unable to wear a mask, temporarily or permanently, may be asked to periodically undergo rapid testing or provide the results of a COVID-19 test administered by the Province of Manitoba.
- F. Parents/guardians who refuse for their child to wear a mask and who cannot substantiate their request with medical documentation supporting the need for an accommodation may elect to provide [homeschooling](#) for their child.
- G. The Superintendent of Schools will:
 - a. closely monitor the requirements and recommendations of Public Health
 - b. advise the Board of any changes in circumstance which may impact the need and/or application of this policy
 - c. recommend policy revisions, including rescindment, for the Board’s consideration in accordance with [Policy BG – School Board Policy Process](#)
- H. The following processes will serve to address concerns related to mask usage:
 - a. Students: [Policy ADD – Safe Schools](#)
 - b. Parents and Community Members: [Protocol for the Resolution of Concerns](#)
 - c. Employees: [Guidelines for Collegial Resolution of Concerns](#)
- I. Consistent with [Policy CH – Policy Implementation](#), the Board authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to modify the policy on an interim basis to comply with emergent Public Health Orders or situations, subject to the conditions below:
 - a. Any interim modification to the policy made by the Superintendent of Schools will take effect immediately.
 - b. The Superintendent of Schools shall, within forty-eight (48) hours, inform the Chair and Vice-Chair of any interim modification made to the policy.
 - c. The Superintendent of Schools shall, at the next regular meeting of the Board, inform the Board of any interim modification made to the policy and recommend formal adoption of the modifications.
 - d. Actions taken by the Superintendent of Schools are subject to Board review.
 - e. Actions taken by the Superintendent of Schools shall be consistent with the overall policy of the Board.

Adopted:	<i>First Reading – August 24, 2021 2nd & 3rd Reading – Sept. 7, 2021</i>	Legal References:
Revised:		Public Schools Act (Manitoba) 41(1) Workplace Safety and Health Act (Manitoba) 4(1) & 4(2)