

Van Do-Reynoso, MPH, PhD Director
Suzanne Jacobson, CPA Chief Financial Officer
Paige Batson, MA, PHN, RN Deputy Director
Darrin Eisenbarth Deputy Director
Dana Gamble, LCSW Interim Deputy Director
Polly Baldwin, MD, MPH Medical Director
Henning Ansorg, MD Health Officer

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Masks and Mask Exemptions in Schools

Our number one priority is to keep children in the classroom as much as possible because we know that is best for their education and that is best for their mental health. Masks provide a safe environment for students and staff in the classroom. Masks are one of the most effective and simplest safety mitigation layers to prevent in-school transmission of COVID-19. Masks limit the spread of the virus in the air from infected persons and protect others exposed to these particles.

Universal masking indoors in K-12 schools is recommended by the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) and by the [CDC](#) in its Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools. Masks are required indoors in public and private K – 12th grade schools by the California Department of Public Health.

Exemptions to mask requirements are very limited intentionally to support a safe environment for students and staff. The following individuals are exempt from wearing masks:

- Persons younger than two years old.
- Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a mask.
- Persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- Persons for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to the person related to their work.

Assessing for exemption due to a medical condition, mental health condition, disability that prevents wearing a mask, or hearing impairment is a medical determination and therefore **must be made by a physician, nurse practitioner, or other licensed medical professional practicing under the license of a physician.**

The Medical Board of California stated that a physician who grants a mask or other exemption without conducting an appropriate prior exam and without a finding of a legitimate medical reason supporting such an exemption within the standard of care may be subjecting their license to disciplinary action.