

**From:** [Forhan, Cara](#)  
**To:** [All District Staff](#)  
**Subject:** Update on mask guidance at work and FAQ  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 2, 2021 11:46:01 AM

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## *A Message from the COVID Safety Team and Human Resources*

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have consistently followed the guidance and recommendations from a number of organizations and health experts, which have influenced how we work and support our students and families and our safety protocols.

The Washington state Department of Labor and Industries recently released new guidance, which says **fully vaccinated employees do not have to wear a mask or socially distance at work**. Employers are required to confirm workers are fully vaccinated before ending mask and social distance requirements.

**The new guidance does not change masking rules for schools.** [You can read more about L&I's guidance here.](#) We want to give a big shout out to staff who work in schools for continuing to wear masks. Most importantly, you are following the law! You are also setting the example for students and providing an additional layer of protection. As you know, not all students are eligible for vaccinations.

For staff working in district facilities that are **not** schools, you may:

1. confirm your vaccination status with human resources,
- 2) have your vaccination status verified, and
- 3) then you may choose not to wear a mask at work.

We recognize that some employees may continue to wear a mask for a variety of reasons such as a medical condition that prevents them getting the vaccine, a disinclination to disclose vaccination status, or as a continued safety measure. We support all our employees in making these choices.

### [In our district, where can vaccinated adults not wear a mask?](#)

District Office, Central Kitchen, Facilities office, Warehouse, Transportation office and elementary and middle schools on Wednesdays when students are not scheduled to be at school.

### [In our district, how do employees verify their vaccination status?](#)

Human resources (HR) will be on site at district facilities listed below to verify vaccination status for employees who choose to share.

- Stop by today, June 2: District Office
- 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday, June 3 : Transportation office

- 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Friday, June 4: Central Kitchen, Warehouse
- 1 to 2:30 p.m. Friday, June 4: Facilities office (formerly buildings and grounds)

Missed these times/locations? Working in an elementary or middle school & want to provide your records to be mask-free on Wednesdays? Please come visit HR at the District Office with your card or email the front and back of your card to the email below and wait confirmation from HR that they have verified your record.

If meeting on site with HR is not convenient for you, you may email a picture of the front and back of your vaccination card  
to: [bps.immunizationrecords@bellingshamschools.org](mailto:bps.immunizationrecords@bellingshamschools.org)

When HR has received and logged your vaccination status, they will give you an “I got vaccinated” button to put on your work badge lanyard. When you receive the button, you may choose to not wear a mask in designated workspaces.

Please keep reading for frequently asked questions.

- **I cannot find my vaccination card. What do I do?**

Human resources can help you log on to [Washington MyIR](#) to check your vaccination status.

- **I am not vaccinated. What are my options?**

If you have not verified full vaccination status with HR, you must continue to wear a mask or cloth face covering at work.

- **I do not want to disclose my vaccination status to my employer.**

If you have not verified full vaccination status with HR, you must continue to wear a cloth face covering at work.

- **I feel more comfortable wearing a mask or face covering at work.**

Anyone is welcome to wear a mask or face covering at any time for any reason.

- **I am working in a school and students are not on site. Do I have to wear a mask? (e.g. I am working in an elementary school on a Wednesday)**

If you have verified full vaccination status with HR, you may choose to not wear a mask in your Bellingham Public Schools worksite when your building is not in session for school. For example, in elementary and middle schools on Wednesdays and in all school buildings after June 18. However, any time a student is present you must wear a mask. For high school personnel, masking expectations have not changed. High school is in session five days each week.

- **Do visitors to buildings that are not schools have to wear masks?**

Yes, anyone who is not an employee must wear a mask or cloth face covering in our district work spaces.

- **Do adults working outside on school grounds have to wear masks?**

If you are fully vaccinated and working alone outside, you do not have to wear a mask. Please have a mask ready in case you come into close contact with other individuals or go inside the school. If you have not verified full vaccination status with HR, you must wear a cloth face covering or appropriate protective equipment for the task.

- **Is the vaccine required for work? Are employees required to disclose vaccine status?**

COVID-19 vaccination is not required to work in Bellingham Public Schools and employees are not required to disclose their vaccination status. Simply put, employees who provide proof of being fully vaccinated won't have to wear a mask or socially distance at work per new L&I rules. Additionally, it is not a HIPPA violation for an employer to ask an employee to provide proof that they have been vaccinated in order to allow that individual to work without wearing a mask as HIPPA specifically applies to healthcare providers and health plans.

- **I want to be able to talk to colleagues about vaccinations and our district practice.**

Key messages and sites to learn more:

- [Vaccines are one of the tools we have to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)
- Vaccination is not a requirement for in person learning, but it is an important measure that can help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the school environment and the broader community.
- The new guidance, [K12 School Requirements 2021-2022](#), which goes into effect this summer says, "Schools should actively promote vaccination among all eligible students, staff, and volunteers." Guidance from our Governor, state and local health department, and the state superintendent have all been in support of schools doing all we can to support vaccinations.
- [Students and staff members still need to wear masks in school settings given that children under 12 are not yet eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.](#)
- [Updated state mask order](#)

