

We have reviewed the updated health and safety guidelines from the New Mexico Early Childhood Education & Care Department (ECECD) along with the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) regarding students wearing masks. **Cloth face masks of appropriate size are now required to be worn by students three years of age or older.**

With that said, the ECECD and the NMDOH have given us discretion to use our best judgment about when a student's mask needs to be removed. Reasons for mask removal might include if a mask is creating discomfort for a student, if they are continuously touching their face, manipulating the mask, or if the mask has become contaminated. When a mask is removed, it will be stored in a paper bag inside the student's backpack. Masks will not be worn at snack time.

Please note, **if a child cannot remove the mask without assistance, even if they are over the age of three, they should not wear a mask.**

Cloth face coverings should:

1. fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
2. be secured with ties or ear loops
3. include multiple layers of fabric
4. allow for breathing without restriction
5. be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

We understand this may create some additional stress and worry for our families. Remember, this is new to all of us. We will create strategies for teaching students use of masks. This will include setting aside spaces and times during class in which a student can remove their mask for brief periods, if needed.

Students will not be disciplined if they are struggling with wearing a mask. Our goal will be to help students increase their tolerance to wearing a mask. We will be exercising flexibility and patience with students as we work towards compliance with this requirement.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

-Mrs. Good and Ms. Natalie