

INDIANA SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Virus and Highly Contagious Disease Policy

Policy O-70

We at the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ISBVI), believe it is of paramount importance to ensure the health, safety and well-being of employees, students, contractors, volunteers, vendors, and visitors.

This policy is designed to provide ISBVI employees, students, contractors, volunteers, vendors, and visitors clear direction and expectations when it is necessary to wear masks/face coverings and use other personal protective equipment to help ensure the safety of self and others.

All individuals while on the campus of the ISBVI must wear and have in their possession a mask/face covering when entering all buildings, as well as in hallways, elevators, public spaces, and common areas.

Masks/face coverings must be worn in office spaces and outdoor spaces where physical distancing is difficult to maintain. Wearing a mask or face covering is not required in private offices or when alone in a space with a door closed. Masks/face coverings should be worn while teaching and interacting with others, and while walking to and using the bathroom or laundry rooms in residence halls.

Face covering means a covering of the nose and mouth that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is wrapped around the lower face. A face covering can be made of a variety of synthetic or natural fabrics, including cotton, silk, or linen, and can include a plastic face shield that covers the nose and mouth. Face coverings may be factory-made, sewn by hand, or improvised from household items, including but not limited to, scarves, bandanas, T-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels. Per the Centers for Disease Control guidelines, masks/face coverings should:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face;
- Completely cover the nose and mouth;
- Be secured with ties or ear loops;
- Include multiple layers of fabric;
- Allow for breathing without restriction;
- Be able to be laundered and machine-dried without damage or change to shape.

Masks/face coverings may be removed when:

- Eating or drinking when spaced at least 6 feet apart;
- Seated at desks or assigned workspaces at least 6 feet apart;
- Engaged in any activity at least 6 feet apart.

All employees, teachers, and students, as well as coaches, athletes and any person on campus is required to wear a mask/face covering when using exercise equipment or participating in physical activity indoors when proper social distancing cannot be maintained. This includes, but is not limited to “working out”, physical education, and sports practices.

There are few exceptions to wearing a face covering. Students and athletes may not be required to wear face covering while engaged in activity or competition that prevent wearing face coverings, but must wear face coverings when on the sidelines, and any time 6 feet of social distancing is not possible, regardless of being indoors or outdoors.

Any ISBVI student who cannot wear a mask or face covering due to a medical condition, including those with respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition, and students who would be unable to remove a mask without assistance may not be required to wear face coverings. Individuals who are communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing impaired or who has another disability, where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication, may not be required to wear face coverings; however, individuals should consider using another type of face covering such as a plastic face shield. The risk of not wearing a face covering may outweigh the risk of wearing a face covering, therefore, exceptions will be made on a case by case basis.

Students are not required to show documentation that an exception applies.

It is also recommended that students be spaced 6 feet apart in classrooms when possible and all individuals maintain proper social distancing whenever possible. Students should be kept with the same group of students, in the same room or area, as much as possible and given assigned seats.

Additionally:

- Nonessential visitors may not be allowed in the school;
- Nonessential travel may be curtailed which may include athletic trips, field trips, community-based instruction, etc.;
- Hand washing or sanitizing is required at arrival, before and after recess, before and after eating and after using the restroom;
- Regular and additional cleaning of high-traffic areas and high-touch surfaces will be routinely performed;
- Added precautions will be taken when preparing food, rendering health care, transporting students by the ISBVI and in dormitory settings and recreation activities;
- Further precautions will be applied in the dormitory settings and during recreation activities;
- Parents and/or guardians will receive weekly student and/or school updates;
- All students, faculty, and staff are encouraged not to come to campus if experiencing symptoms of illness such as fever, shortness of breath believed to be associated with illness or cough believed to be associated with illness;
- All sick students, faculty and staff must be fever-free without the use of medication for 72 hours before returning to school;

- Any students, faculty and staff testing positive for the coronavirus must stay out of school for 10 school days when symptoms appear or with a positive test (in asymptomatic cases).

Staff found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to the disciplinary process, up to and including dismissal from employment. Contractors, volunteers, vendors, and visitors may be banned from the ISBVI campus and be subject to appropriate legal action.

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Approved: 7/28/20

Reviewed and Approved: 10/25/21

ISBVI Superintendent: _____ **Date**

ISBVI Board Chair: _____ **Date**