

THE HOWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
10910 Clarksville Pike
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Circular No. 16
Series 2020-2021
December 15, 2020

Chief Operating Officer

Face Masks and Respirators

To: All Staff

From: Scott W. Washington, Chief Operating Officer







Masks and Respirators Permissible for Staff Use

Wearing a mask is one of the best ways to stop the spread of COVID-19. [Circular No. 10](#), “Staff Mask Expectations” (issued September 4, 2020), detailed the expectations for staff to wear masks/face coverings while inside school system buildings.

With emerging scientific information around the spread of COVID-19, some individuals may independently choose to wear a face covering intended to provide greater protection than a cloth mask, such as a KN95 mask or N95 respirator. Several Occupational Health and Safety Administration regulations carry implications for wearing respirators, which require clarification. The attachment provides information regarding masks and respirators that are permissible/not permissible for HCPSS staff use.

Please contact Pierre van Greunen, Safety and Risk Management Officer at pierre_vangreunen@hcpss.org if you have questions or need additional information.

SWW/PvG/vw

Mask/Respirator Type	Permitted Use
<p>Cloth masks</p> 	<p>Staff may use. Recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for use by most people.</p>
<p>Cloth or neoprene masks with exhalation valve(s)</p> 	<p>Not permitted. The exhalation valve does not provide protection to people around you.</p>
<p>KN95 mask</p> 	<p>Staff may use. Meets Chinese respiratory protection standards, and is treated the same as a cloth mask under Occupational Health and Safety Administration regulation.</p>
<p>N95 respirator</p> 	<p>Staff may use. Refer to Appendix D of the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) respiratory protection regulation.</p> <p>An N95 is classified as a respirator under OSHA Regulation.</p>
<p>N95 respirator with exhalation valve</p> 	<p>Not permitted. The exhalation valve does not provide protection to people around you.</p>
<p>Half-face elastomeric respirator</p> 	<p>Not permitted without prior authorization from Risk Management, due to OSHA respiratory protection regulation requirements.</p> <p>Please note that wearing this respirator increases breathing resistance and puts more stress on the cardiovascular and respiratory systems.</p> <p>OSHA recommends that healthcare workers with exposure to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients use respirators. In HCPSS, only Nurses and Health Assistants are issued elastomeric respirators.</p>