



What about wearing surgical masks at school?

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, who is our primary source for health information, clearly states in their Frequently Asked Questions <https://www.wechu.org/z-health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019>

At this point in time, there is no need to wear any mask unless you are symptomatic or taking care of a suspect case of 2019-nCoV. It is recommended that you follow usual health precautions above and follow the instructions provided by health care facilities.

“Masks in general are not recommended for those without symptoms to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. Students/children and staff who are experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness should stay home from the school/childcare setting. Surgical masks in school/childcare settings is not recommended, as these are not settings where people are typically trained on their use, and there is a potential risk of infection with improper mask use and disposal. In young children, in particular, masks can be irritating and may lead to increased touching of the face and eyes.”¹

Typically, when someone is wearing a mask it is for their own symptoms or stems from their physician’s advice.

As a school system, we are a teaching and learning institution. At this time, we are not to ask students or families to remove a mask if they are wearing them but feel free to engage in a conversation with some of the following points:

- That wearing a mask typically indicates that the person is ill and they do not want to share their symptoms
- How wearing masks can lead to panic at the school especially for our students
- That the best defense to avoid becoming ill is to engage in cleaning etiquette: hand washing and covering mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- Encouraging people to stay home if feeling sick.

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/guidance-schools-childcare-programs.html>