

CIRCULAR

Date: September 4, 2020

CIRCULAR NUMBER: COVID-19: 2020-138

To: Early Learning and Child Care Providers

Subject: Mask use for children in ELCC facilities (centres, nursery schools and family child care homes)

Type: Information Only

Effective Date: **September 8, 2020**

NOTE: This circular does not apply to ELCC facilities currently subject to a Public Health Order pertaining to mask use.

Keeping everyone healthy and safe is the top priority of the early learning and child care (ELCC) sector. As Manitoba's schools reopen, more children are also returning to child care. We must all continue to practice public health fundamentals, including staying home when sick, practicing proper hand-washing/sanitizing and cough etiquette, and practicing physical distancing.

Per ELCC Circular 2020-131, effective September 8, 2020:

- All children in grade 4 (aged 8/9) and higher are required to wear non-medical masks at school and while attending their child care facility, when physical distancing of two metres is not possible.
- Children in grade 3 or under are not required to wear a non-medical mask while at school or while attending their child care facility. Parents/guardians may choose to have their younger child(ren) wear a mask, provided the child can wear it properly as per provincial guidance (please see below for more information).
- Masks are required on school buses for students (all ages), bus drivers and any other passenger(s) on the school bus.
- ELCC staff, including home-based child care providers, are advised to wear non-medical masks when caring for children of any age, when physical distancing is not possible.
- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide masks daily for each child attending a child care facility (at least 2 masks per day)

Manitoba's Chief Provincial Public Health Officer, Dr. Brent Roussin, has also shared the following guidance with ELCC providers:

- Children under the age of 2 are not required to wear a mask.
- Children may remove their masks to take breaks outside while playing.
- Masks can also be removed while indoors at an ELCC facility provided that physical distancing can be maintained, and while eating or drinking.

Parents and guardians are asked to refer to the following mask guidance prepared by Manitoba Education. These resources include important information about proper mask use including information about who should not wear a mask, as well as proper care, storage and handling of non-medical, reusable masks as well as disposable masks.

- See Mask Guidance for K-12:
https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/mask_guidance.pdf
- New video – Helping parents and children put on and take off masks properly
<https://youtu.be/eGhLwmFRyZY>
- Parent/Guardian and Educator Frequently Asked Questions and Answers:
https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/qa_welcome_back_combined.pdf

It is important to keep in mind that the public health situation is rapidly evolving. The ELCC Program will continue to work closely with Public Health to ensure that guidance provided to child care facilities is in step with the provincial Public Health Orders and the advice of Public Health officials in Manitoba.

Early Learning and Child Care specific resources and circulars can be accessed at:
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/covid-circulars.html>.

Thank you for your continued cooperation,

Sarah Thiele, Assistant Deputy Minister
Children and Youth Services