

# News Release

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## Arizona Department of Health Services Strengthens Mask Requirement for Schools

*Emergency measure aims to improve mitigation measures on campuses and buses*

To protect the health of our school communities, the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) has issued an [emergency measure](#) requiring district and charter schools to immediately mandate that masks are worn on school campuses, on school buses, and during school-associated activities by all students, faculty, staff, contractors, and visitors.

“Keeping kids and teachers safe is one of our top priorities,” said Governor Doug Ducey. “This emergency measure issued by ADHS addresses the serious threat COVID-19 poses to our communities. It requires schools to implement the simple step of mask-wearing to reduce transmission and keep our kids safe.”

In July, Governor Ducey issued [Executive Order 2020-51](#), which required all school districts and charter schools to develop and implement a policy to require masks for all staff and students. It also required ADHS and the Arizona Department of Education to work collaboratively to develop the [Guidance for Safely Returning to Schools](#), based on the [Roadmap for Reopening Schools](#). As part of this guidance, schools must implement COVID-19 mitigation strategies, based on the school benchmarks, to keep students and staff safe on campuses. These mitigation strategies include mask-wearing, physical distancing, increased cleaning and disinfecting protocols, limiting the size of groups, and increased hand hygiene.

“Based on recently released data, we now know masks provide more protection than previously thought,” said Dr. Cara Christ, director of ADHS. “The new studies show that wearing a mask also protects the mask wearer, not just those around them. I encourage everyone to wear a mask whenever they are around people they don’t live with.”

Public health works closely with schools to provide technical assistance to schools on implementing mitigation measures, such as masks. To ensure everyone who needs a mask has access to one, ADHS has partnered with Hanes to provide five free masks to students and their families. Families and schools can go to [azhealth.gov/ordermasks](https://azhealth.gov/ordermasks) to have free masks shipped to them.

For more information, please visit [azhealth.gov/COVID19](https://azhealth.gov/COVID19).

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