



January 6, 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Our Lady of Grace School recognizes that some students have legitimate disabilities, medical conditions, or mental health conditions that prevent them from wearing a face mask. In such a situation, the student may qualify for an exemption to wear a face mask when required at school.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) describes those individuals who are typically exempt from always wearing face coverings, regardless of setting:

- Students with certain disabilities where it is determined that they 1) cannot use a face mask correctly because he or she cannot limit sucking, drooling, or having excess saliva on the mask, or 2) are unable to remove a face mask without assistance.
- Students with a medical condition for whom wearing a face mask could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance. (Such conditions are rare.)
- Students who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- Students with certain disabilities, including documented cognitive, intellectual, developmental, sensory, and behavioral disorders such as autism spectrum disorder whereby tolerating the use of a face mask proves difficult.

Persons exempted from wearing a face mask due to a medical condition must wear a non-restrictive alternative such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, as long as their condition permits it.

Families are encouraged to first work with OLG School's teachers, staff, and counselor to teach and reinforce mask use before any request for a medical exemption is made.

Upon submission, a completed mask exemption application signed by a parent and a California licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant practicing in medicine addressing the student's specific condition and/or need will be reviewed. If the application is approved, OLG School will develop and implement alternative educational opportunities for students who are not able to wear a face covering. These may include and are not limited to any of the following strategies:

- off-campus distance (home) learning with weekly staff check-in/support via Zoom;



- pullout instruction (the use of a parent-provided plexiglass barrier around student's desk); and/or
- physical distancing from classmates within an alternate classroom, provided this is prescribed by an Individualized Service Plan (ISP) or 504 Plan.

Any decision of OLG School regarding face mask exemptions may be appealed by the parents or guardians of the student to the pastor of Our Lady of Grace parish. After careful consideration, possibly including consultation with others who are knowledgeable, his decision will be considered final.

Approved exemptions are valid for the entire academic year or portion thereof. An entirely new mask exemption form must be submitted for each subsequent school year when face masks are generally required by all in a school setting.

Should you have any questions before submitting the mask exemption form, please don't hesitate to contact me at emares@olg.org or (619) 466-0055 x 11.

Sincerely yours,

Erin Mares
Principal