

West Neighbourhood House	
Policy Title:	Mandatory Use of Mask or Face Shield
Approved by:	Management, Health & Safety Committee, and Pandemic Committee
Approval date:	September 2020
Revision dates:	May 2021 / / /

Policy Statement

West Neighbourhood House is committed to ensuring the health and safety of its staff, students, participants, volunteers, visitors, vendors and contractors.

Medical grade masks will be worn for the purposes of infection control, to reduce the transmission risk of COVID-19 and protect others in close proximity to the wearer by preventing the spread of bacteria and viruses to others. COVID-19 can be spread from infected individuals who have a few or no symptoms and are unaware they may be infected. Individuals who cannot wear a mask due to medical reasons, will be permitted to wear a face shield.

Routine masking and face shields will be used in addition to other workplace strategies such as physical distancing, handwashing, cleaning, working from home, and providing plexi-glass/plastic barriers for specific roles etc.

Applicability

- All Staff
- Program Participants, Clients, Members
- Volunteers
- Students
- Visitors
- Vendors
- Contractors

Definitions

"Mask" – a form of medical grade mask (minimally three ply surgical) that covers the nose, mouth and chin without gapping.

General Principles and Procedures

1. As of July 7, 2020 and in accordance with City of Toronto By-Law 541-2020, (the “Bylaw”) all staff, participants, volunteers, students, visitors, vendors and contractors etc. are required to wear a mask or face covering when –

- entering and remaining within any West Neighbourhood House (West NH) site
 - participating in any West NH in-person program/activity/service that is off site (e.g. outreach, home supports, MOW etc.)
 - in any West NH site or activity where they are in a common/public area and/or with someone else (e.g. hallways, meeting rooms, etc. but not in an office/workspace when alone).
2. The mask or face shield must cover the nose, mouth and chin. The mask should have a good seal with no gaps around the face.
3. People may temporarily remove the mask or face shield where necessary for the purposes of receiving services (e.g. eating, drinking, etc.). When eating everyone must social distance, sanitize hands before/after and be sure the space where food has been consumed is cleaned (either by self or cleaning staff).
4. Staff will inform, educate and ask people in the building or those with whom we work on and off-site to wear masks or face shield and follow this policy.
5. West NH will provide masks at our entrances, when providing services off-site as well as ask people to bring their own masks.
6. Staff shall ensure that a sign on the Bylaw is posted and visible to the public.

Exemptions

7. The following persons are exempted from requiring a mask or face shield and will not be required to provide proof of such exemption:

- Children under two years of age;
- Persons with an underlying medical condition which inhibits their ability to wear a mask or face shield;
- Persons who are unable to place, remove, or use a mask or face shield without assistance; and
- Persons who are reasonably accommodated by not wearing a mask or face shield under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Anyone other than a child under 2 who falls into the categories above will be given a face shield to wear so they can be in our locations.

8. All staff and volunteers shall be familiar with this policy including how to respond if various circumstances below as follows:

- a) Person arrives without a mask or face shield because they forgot or do not have one:
If over age two, person will be offered a mask so they can be in the building or given service (note: participants are encouraged to use masks when receiving Meals on Wheels and to maintain social distancing during food drop-off);

- b) Person who is exempt from wearing a mask or face shield: If over age two, person will be offered a face shield and once they put it on so they can be in the building or given service;
- c) Person seeking more information about the policy and Bylaw: Staff will explain the policy or Bylaw or share the By-law at <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2020/law0541.pdf>;
- d) Person wearing a mask improperly or taking it off in the presence of others: All staff will remind anyone (over age two) not wearing a face shield or mask or properly to wear one;
- e) Person who becomes aggressive about the new requirement: Will be dealt with by staff as per our usual procedures in dealing with difficult situations including education, de-escalation, calling for back-up etc.;
- f) Person wanting information about the importance of wearing a mask; Staff will explain or share the information at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/about-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html> ;
- g) Person asking about the availability of alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration): Will be directed to a hand sanitizer;
- h) Person who wants to know if they can be fined: Will be told they can be fined by the City should there be a By-law enforcer.

Compliance and Enforcement

9. Persons on West NH premises who are determined to be non-compliant with this policy or the Bylaw may be asked to leave the premises or not participate in a program/activity/service and may face a penalty in accordance with the Bylaw.

10. West NH reserves the right to refuse service or permit entry to premises or program/activity/service to any persons who are determined to be non-compliant with this policy.

11. Staff and volunteers who are determined to be non-compliant with this policy may face disciplinary action, including suspension of any and duties, responsibilities and privileges, access to premises and program/activity/service and termination of any applicable employment or volunteer agreements.

12. Participants, visitors, vendors and contractors who are determined to be non-compliant with this policy may have their access to West NH services, goods, premises and other privileges suspended.

13. This policy has been created in compliance with the Bylaw.