Why a Universal Mask Requirement in RISD?
Masks are recommended as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the mask coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. This is called source control. This recommendation is based on what we know about the role respiratory droplets play in the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, paired with emerging evidence from clinical and laboratory studies that shows masks reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth. COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet), so the use of masks is particularly important in settings where people are close to each other or where social distancing is difficult to maintain. CDC’s recommendations for masks will be updated as new scientific evidence becomes available.

Selecting a Cloth Face Covering/Mask
When choosing a mask, look for masks made with at least two layers of fabric. It should cover your nose and mouth without large gaps. The mask should have ear loops or ties so you can adjust it. For people who wear glasses, look for a mask with a bendable border at the top so you can mold the mask to fit the bridge of your nose and prevent your glasses from fogging. Professional masks should be reserved for health care workers on the front lines caring for patients. The denser the fibers of a material, the better it is at filtering. That’s why higher thread counts lead to higher efficacy. For this reason, bandanas, neck gaiters, and fleeces are highly discouraged.

Best Practices for the Educational Setting:
- **CDC** and **AAP** recommends all people 2 years of age and older wear a cloth face covering when around people who don’t live in the same household, especially when social distancing (staying at least 6 feet from others who are not from your household) is difficult to maintain.
- See CDC Table: Additional Considerations for Use of Cloth Face Coverings in K12 School
- **Texas requires** all individuals age 10 years or older to wear a face covering (over the nose and mouth) “wherever it is not feasible to maintain 6 feet of social distancing from another person not in the same household.” (Governor’s Executive Order GA-29)
- Have students wear face masks as much as possible, especially when in hallways or bathrooms.

All students and staff are expected to wear a cloth face covering when on RISD campuses or at RISD events.
or in proximity to students from other classes (HSPH p.7, 25). Children who ride the bus are recommended to wear their mask on the bus and follow any spaced seating rules. If carpooling, the driver and every child in a carpool is recommended to wear a mask for the entire trip. (CDC)

- Ensure masks meet effectiveness criteria in materials, and fit snugly over the nose bridge, mouth and chin. (CDC, WHO, Stanford Medicine, HSPH p. 7, 26)
  - Masks or respirators with exhalation valves are not recommended, since they are not effective as source control and decrease protection of persons around the wearer. (CDC)
  - Gaiter type neck fleece are not advised as face coverings for COVID-19 prevention, as there is evidence they offer little protection, and may increase transmission and dispersion of small droplets. (Science Advances 8/2020)

- Establish/reinforce a culture of health, safety and shared responsibility. Prior to school opening, train all students and staff on how to choose, correctly wear, care for, clean or discard, and store their masks. (CDC, HSPH p. 7, 26)

- Mask Breaks: Build in time throughout the day where students and staff can safely take a break from their masks to avoid ‘mask fatigue’ and to encourage compliance. For example, during time spent outside when distancing can be maintained. (HSPH p 7, 26)

- Masks should be stored in a space designated for each student that is separate from others when not being worn. Have additional back-up masks in case needed during the day. (CDC, HSPH p26)

- CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings.

**Face Shields**

A face shield is primarily used for eye protection for the person wearing it. At this time, it is not known what level of protection a face shield provides to people nearby from the spray of respiratory droplets from the wearer. There is currently not enough evidence to support the effectiveness of face shields for source control. Therefore, CDC does not currently recommend the use of face shields as a substitute for masks.

However, for some people wearing a mask may not be feasible in every situation (for example, people who are deaf or hard of hearing or those who care for or interact with hearing-impaired persons). Here are considerations for individuals who must wear a face shield instead of a mask:

- Although evidence on face shields is limited, the available data suggest that the following face shields may provide better source control than others:
  - Face shields that wrap around the sides of the wearer’s face and extend below the chin
  - Hooded face shields

- Face shield wearers should wash their hands before and after removing the face shield and avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth when removing it.

**REFERENCES**

