



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Peter Mason
Deputy Commissioner

To: DDS Qualified Providers

Cc: Jordan Scheff, Commissioner, Peter Mason, Deputy Commissioner; Katie Rock-Burns, Chief of Staff; Scott McWilliams, Chief Fiscal Officer; Nicholas Jerard, Assistant Chief Fiscal Officer; David David, Director of Service Development and Support, Amber M. Burke, Director of Employment and Day Services

Date: May 27, 2021

RE: Employment and Day Provider Guidance- Masking and Vaccination Status

Mask Requirements:

- The mask mandate in CT has been lifted for those individuals who are fully vaccinated.
 - **Executive Order No. 12A** <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Office-of-the-Governor/Executive-Orders/Lamont-Executive-Orders/Executive-Order-No-12A.pdf>
As of May 20, 2021: *“Effective immediately, any person while indoors in a public place who does not maintain a safe social distance of approximately six feet from every other person and who is not fully vaccinated for COVID-19 shall cover their mouth and nose with a mask or cloth face covering. A person shall be considered fully vaccinated 14 days after receiving the final recommended dose of a vaccine approved for use against COVID-19 by U.S. Food and Drug Administration, or as otherwise defined by the Centers for Disease Control.”*
 - a. *Nothing in this order shall require the use of a mask or cloth face covering by anyone for whom doing so would be contrary to his or her health or safety because of a medical condition, behavioral condition, or disability, or anyone under the age of 2 years. Any person who declines to wear a mask or face covering because of a medical condition, behavioral condition, or disability shall be exempt from this order and any requirement to wear masks or face coverings promulgated in or pursuant to any COVID-19 Order, but only if such person provides written documentation that the person is qualified for the exemption from a licensed or certified medical provider, psychologist, marriage and family therapist, professional counselor, social worker, or behavior analyst, the Department of Developmental Services or other state agency that provides or supports services for people with emotional, intellectual or physical disabilities, or a person authorized by any such agency. Such documentation shall not be required to name or describe the condition that qualifies the person for the exemption. “*
- However, the Department of Public Health (DPH) has issued a rule articulating the types of facilities where masks and cloth face coverings are still required. <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Coronavirus/20210520-DPH-Order-Regarding-Universal-Masking.pdf>

- Conditions and environments requiring universal masking on and after May 19, 2021 include:
 - “d) *assisted living facilities or other congregate living settings (including residential care and group homes) when healthcare or supportive services are being provided*”.
- For DDS, in this context, congregate living settings mean residential group homes only.
- What does this mean for DDS Day and Employment providers?
 - Masking is optional for both the participants and staff that are *fully vaccinated* and is therefore up to the DDS qualified provider to implement as appropriate.
 - Providers, as with all private businesses, may choose to enforce a different masking policy, but must adhere to the state’s minimum guidance that individuals who are not fully vaccinated must wear a mask.
 - Providers cannot refuse to provide an individual with face-to-face supports who is unable to tolerate wearing a mask and has a mask exemption form. DDS case managers can facilitate the process for issuing a mask exemption form for eligible DDS individuals.
 - As long as Appendix K is still applicable, providers may continue to provide eligible supports through virtual means if they are unable to participate in face-to-face services.

Vaccination Requirements:

- The state is not taking a position on requiring COVID vaccinations for an individual to participate in a DDS funded day/employment program.
- Providers cannot refuse to serve an individual who provides written medical documentation that they are unable to be vaccinated.

As noted in the [4/9/21 reopening guidance](#), DDS Day and Employment programs are able to open at 100% capacity, however the social distancing requirements articulated in that guidance, is now repealed. Providers may implement social distancing protocols as they deem appropriate.

This guidance is subject to change based on new and evolving guidance from our local, state and federal partners.

Thank you for everyone’s ongoing efforts. For questions please contact dds.covid19@ct.gov.