

## Medical Notes for Exemptions

### 1) What are my obligations when my patient asks for a medical note exempting them from wearing a mask?

The Chief Provincial Public Health Officer strongly recommends wearing a mask in public to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when social distancing cannot be maintained. Masks have been mandated in schools for Grades 4-12 in Manitoba and may be required in public spaces in various locations across Manitoba.

Writing a medical note is deemed the provision of medical care and must adhere to the requirements of good medical care in the practice of medicine as defined in the regulations and Standards of Practice.

[Section 3 of the Standards of Practice regulation](#)

[Section 3 of the Practice of Medicine regulation](#)

Members are expected to provide patients with appropriate education and guidance on mask wearing in alignment with current Manitoba Public Health Guidelines.

Members must abstain from providing anyone for any reason a medical mask exemption either written or verbal in the absence of a justified medical condition or based upon information that is known to be inaccurate. Feeling uncomfortable or holding a strong opinion against mask wearing are not considered to be medical indications for exemption.

There are very few medical conditions that justify an exemption from wearing a face mask and members should consult with the latest recommendations from Shared Health/Public Health regarding appropriate circumstances for an exemption. Examples may include but are not limited to:

- *Children under 5 years*
- *A person with a medical condition that is unrelated to COVID-19 including breathing or cognitive difficulties or a disability, which prevent them from safely wearing a mask; and*
- *A person who is unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person*

Members are reminded to document in the medical record their reasons to grant or refuse the mask exemption.

Members are not obliged to provide a medical note of exemption if they deem it is not medically indicated or appropriate for the individual circumstances.

## 2) What are my obligations when a parent requests a medical note excusing their child from returning to in-person learning at school due to concerns about COVID-19?

Many parents and students are anxious about a return to classes and several schools have identified that they require medical documentation to support requests for an alternative to the planned in-person programming.

Writing a medical note reflects the provision of medical care and must adhere to the requirements of good medical care in the practice of medicine as defined in the regulations and Standards of Practice.

[Section 3 of the Standards of Practice regulation](#)

[Section 3 of the Practice of Medicine regulation](#)

Members are expected to provide patients with appropriate education and guidance on risk reduction for COVID-19 infection as per current Manitoba Public Health guidelines (i.e. mask use, physical distancing, hand washing) and have an informed conversation with parents and children about their reasons for requesting an exemption from in-person learning.

There may be medical conditions where the risk of infection with COVID-19 from in-person learning is substantial and/or where children may be at a higher risk of death should they contract the virus while attending school. It is important for members to use their knowledge, skill and judgement of the child's diagnosis and potential risk of harm from attending school to determine if an exemption to in-person learning should be provided.

Members are reminded to document in the medical record their reasons to grant or refuse the exemption from in-person learning.

Members must abstain from providing anyone an exemption either written or verbal in the absence of a justified medical condition or based upon information that is known to be inaccurate.

Members are not obliged to provide a medical note of exemption if they deem it is not medically indicated or appropriate for the individual circumstances.