

We hope you have all enjoyed the first week of school. We know it can be challenging to return to early mornings and schedules, but it has been great to have staff and students back on campus and we are excited about the year ahead.

We wanted to reach out and share an update with regard to our compliance with the current state-required mask mandates in light of a recent review of the state requirements, observations made of our students after the first week of school and two recent OSHA complaints.

As a result of reviewing State Law OHA Rule 333-019-1025 and OHA requirements, and after discussions with legal counsel and other Christian school leaders, the DCS School Board would like to clarify their stance on the mask requirement as it applies to the operation of our school.

Students are **required** to wear masks at DCS in all settings except for participating in athletics, recess, PE, outside activities or while eating or drinking. As stated in the requirements, DCS will continue to “center on grace and patience and reteach the expectation”. We **expect** parents to support and reinforce DCS policies as stated and agreed upon by parents when they sign their enrollment paperwork.

We would like to pragmatically outline why it is necessary that you comply in these efforts. First, failure to follow these requirements places our staff, our school board and our entire school in jeopardy in the following ways:

- Students who are not in compliance by wearing their masks will have to be quarantined in the event of an exposure, which will result in more students missing class and adding additional work to our teaching staff. This will affect their ability to effectively teach students and communicate with parents.
- Non-compliance at athletic events may result in our school being forced to forfeit competitions or having to eliminate spectators all together.
- Non-compliance puts school personnel at risk. Teachers, office staff and board members are liable. Staff with state certification also risk the loss of their teaching credentials.

Secondly, policing students who are not complying with the guidelines and responding to OSHA complaints due to non-compliance of students and/or spectators at sporting events takes staff and teacher time and resources. For every moment we have to address the mask issue and for every OSHA complaint to which we have to respond, valuable time and energy is being taken from our primary role of providing a Christian education for your children. Given the sacrifice that parents make to have their students at DCS we want to steward your investment well and believe that is best done when we are all pursuing compliance.

We understand that there are varying positions on masking, and that other schools and organizations have taken different stances on how they intend to enforce these mandates or not. However, for the reasons listed above, we believe that it is in the best interest of DCS and our mission to pursue compliance. For that reason, in the case that a student or family chooses not to wear a face covering for reasons other than medical need or disability, our school will follow a process to seek a resolution. However, according to state mandates **“Schools cannot serve a student in-person if they or their family choose not to wear a face covering”**

([link](#)). Consequently, if a family or student refuses to adhere to these requirements, it may necessitate that they seek an alternative educational option.

Please understand, our commitment to follow these mandates is not a statement of support or approval of them, but a necessity for us to continue to offer a Christian education in our community. We fully acknowledge that this has been a very difficult time, but please partner with us, so we can fully focus on using academics as a vehicle for discipleship.

Sincerely, the DCS School Board