



CUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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CHRISTINE ROSS, Ph.D.
School Board Vice Chairman

January 22, 2022

RE: Governor's Executive Order Regarding Masks for Students

Dear CuCPS Families:

Cumberland County Public Schools (CuCPS) has been requiring all students, staff, and visitors to wear masks when inside school buildings. Universal mask wearing was required by Senate Bill 1303. However, on January 15, 2022, Governor Youngkin issued an executive order mandating that parents/guardians be allowed to opt their children out of the mask mandate while inside of school buildings, beginning January 24, 2022. To be in compliance with this new executive order and Senate Bill 1303, CuCPS will permit parents/guardians to opt their students out of the universal mask mandate. A form is available for parents who wish to do so.

Parents/Guardians who still wish their students to remain masked should make that expectation known to their students. Harassing/bullying/discriminating against students who do or who do not wear masks is expressly prohibited.

The executive order stated that the Superintendent of Public Instruction "shall rescind the Interim Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Virginia PreK-12 schools, issued January 14, 2021, and updated October 14, 2021, and issue new guidance for COVID-19 Prevention consistent with this Order." Moreover, parents/guardians should be aware that this executive order is being challenged and may be overturned.

There are some exceptions to the opt-out executive order. Federal law still states that students who are transported to school on public vehicles (car or bus) are still required to wear masks while riding these vehicles. Therefore, in order to be transported to school in school vehicles, students must be masked. Masks are still required for visitors in our school buildings.

We understand that there are different views on the wearing of masks. CuCPS, based on the CDC guidelines, still recommends the wearing of masks (including double masking) and encourages vaccination (including boosting). Staff members will still wear masks as required by the Department of Labor and Industry. The division will continue to implement other mitigation measures, including social distancing to the greatest extent possible, monitoring facilities (including regular changing of air filters), making hand sanitizer available, and promoting frequent hand washing.

Isolation of students/staff who contract COVID-19 and quarantining for close contacts will still be in effect. The COVID-19 screening tool should be used each morning and students who display symptoms should be kept at home.

The safety of all CuCPS students is our main concern. We will keep you informed as new development emerge regarding the wearing of masks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chip Jones", is written over a horizontal line.

Chip Jones, Ed.D.
Superintendent