



Sheepscot Valley Regional School Unit #12
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Howard Tuttle, Superintendent of Schools
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Michael Flynn, Director of School Nutrition

February 20, 2022 (Updates in red below February 27, 2022)

Dear RSU 12 Staff, Students, Families, and Community,

On February 10, 2022, the RSU 12 Board of Directors voted to allow optional masking in RSU 12 schools if the Maine CDC Standard Operating Procedures are changed to no longer require universal masking in order to keep students in school. The Board had anticipated that there might be changes coming to the SOPs.

Indeed, on February 16, 2022, the Maine CDC Standard Operating Procedures were changed and schools are no longer required to do contact tracing and quarantining for people identified as close contacts. We can now remove the mask mandate and still keep our students in school and our schools open. This change was made by the Maine CDC as hospitalization rates and new case rates continue to drop in recent weeks.

As a result of these decisions, RSU 12 will be making a significant change to its COVID-19 protocols starting on Monday, February 28, 2022. When students return to school on Monday after vacation, masks will be optional for all staff, students, and visitors in RSU 12 schools.

With this significant change, I would like to emphasize that all members of the RSU 12 community should feel comfortable with whatever option they choose and no one should be made to feel like they should or should not wear a mask. We should all support each other in individual decisions around the wearing of masks.

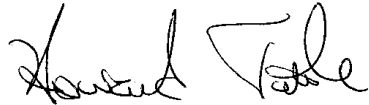
There are some exceptions to the masks optional protocol.

- ~~It is a federal mandate that until at least March 18th all students and staff on buses must wear a mask. This could be extended beyond March 18th. We don't know yet. School buses are considered public transportation.~~ On, February 25th, the federal CDC issued guidance stating that masks are optional on all public transportation including **school buses**. You can find more information here, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html> Because of this new guidance, masks are optional for students and staff on buses in RSU 12 starting on February 28, 2022.
- Quarantines will continue for people who test positive for COVID-19 and if they return after 5 days of quarantine symptom-free then **they must wear a mask for 5 days** while in school. If they quarantine for 10 days, then a mask is optional when they return.
- If our students visit another establishment for a field trip or athletic event, then staff and students will follow the rules of that facility.

COVID-19 is obviously not over and the RSU 12 Board of Directors will continue to monitor Maine CDC's Standard Operating Procedures for future adjustments as we strive to provide quality in-person learning to all RSU 12 students.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my tremendous gratitude for the staff of RSU 12 who are committed to the education of RSU 12 students and have worked diligently and creatively to make learning as enjoyable as possible during this pandemic. Please be patient with RSU 12 staff and remember to thank them for their efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Howard Tuttle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'H' and 'T'.

Howard Tuttle
Superintendent, RSU 12