



# SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## *Office of the Superintendent*

*Timothy M. Van Tassel*  
Superintendent

*Laura Guerrette*  
Executive Secretary

May 18, 2021

Good afternoon Parents, Guardians, Faculty and Staff,

As you are aware, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Governor Lamont have released new guidance on mask-wearing at both outdoor and indoor venues for the foreseeable future. With this being stated, they have also clarified that mask-wearing should continue for schools for the remainder of this academic year due to the numbers of unvaccinated individuals that are currently in-person within schools. With the confusion surrounding this topic, I am sending this communication as a means of addressing concerns about what the Suffield Public Schools will be doing between now and the remainder of the school year.

Please note that mask-wearing will be required by both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals until further notice. At this morning's Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and Department of Public Health (DPH) statewide conference call, it was noted that both agencies are in the process of drafting their communication regarding expectations about mask-wearing for summer programming. In addition, they anticipate releasing updated guidance for the upcoming school year as well. Once there is a change from the status-quo model that now exists, we will communicate this to our families, faculty and staff as soon as it is made available to school districts. Important to note, we look forward to easing our COVID-19 restrictions when this option is made available to our schools in the months ahead. On a very positive note, the DPH has shared that the vaccination rate for 16 and older Connecticut residents is approximately 52%. Upwards of 12% of children ages 12-16 have now accessed vaccines as well. It is anticipated that this will continue to trend upward in the days, weeks, and months ahead. This is very good news that will likely result in the lessening of COVID-19 restrictions that are currently in place in Connecticut schools.

I am hopeful this addresses the concerns and questions that have arisen regarding mask mandates, and we look forward to sharing information as we continue to move closer to what will be our post-pandemic school operational status.

Sincerely,  
Timothy M. Van Tassel, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools