



BURGETTSTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Mr. Stephen P. Puskar
Superintendent

December 12, 2021

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students

Late Friday afternoon (December 10, 2021) the Pennsylvania Supreme Court struck down the Acting Secretary of Health's school masking order, effective immediately. The purpose of this letter is to offer information and guidance as to how action of the court affects the operation of the Burgettstown Area School District.

Like all school districts, our school district has a Health and Safety Plan. This plan helps us navigate our response to the pandemic, and informs our decision making relative to items such as masking. Accordingly, as a result of the mask order ending, and in keeping with the guidance of our Health and Safety Plan, masks are no longer required in the Burgettstown Area schools or other District owned facilities. However, because our Health and Safety Plan indicates that we will follow CDC and DOH guidelines, we recommend individuals wear masks inside our facilities. Again, this is simply a recommendation, not a requirement.

A few other considerations:

- Masks remain REQUIRED on our school busses and van transportation. This is a federal requirement for all who use public transportation. School buses are considered public transportation
- There will be certain instances when masks will be required. The main one will be if a person is fully vaccinated and asymptomatic, but is a close contact of someone who tests positive for Covid-19. If the close contact wishes to remain in school and wishes not to quarantine, they will be required to wear a mask for 10 days.
- One of the best ways to decrease the chance of having to quarantine if you are a close contact is to always wear a mask. When a Covid positive case is identified, school officials run through a protocol to determine who may need to quarantine. Students

who are masked at the time of exposure may not have to quarantine under some circumstances.

- In addition to reducing the occurrences of Covid-19 cases as well as the severity of the virus once contracted, vaccinations help reduce the chance of a student or other individual having to quarantine. The Covid-19 vaccine and the booster vaccine are not required. However, those who are vaccinated may not have to quarantine.
- While masks are no longer required, it is still wise to practice good hygiene habits such as thorough hand washing and covering ones mouth when sneezing.
- We ask that parents consider keeping their child(ren) home from school if their child(ren) is/are displaying multiple Covid symptoms, and we recommend students get tested should they believe they have the onset of the virus.

In many ways, we are very fortunate to be on the doorstep of the December holiday break without experiencing the need to shift to long-term hybrid or full remote instruction. Our goal is to maintain five-days-per-week, in-person instruction. While there are many different opinions as to whether or not the mask requirement helped, it will be important over the coming months to remain vigilant and take whatever protective measures one can to remain healthy.

Finally, if you have questions, comments, or concerns about the switch away from the mask requirement, please contact a building principal or school nurse, or call the Office of the Superintendent.