

Key Message: MASKING IN SCHOOLS

August 23, 2021

Questions that may be asked

Why are you forcing our students to wear masks?

Masks are not good for children, why don't you do what's right and not require them?

Talking Points and Tips

Talking Points:

- We work hard to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff.
- I understand there are varying opinions on masking and the severity of the virus. The CDC and DOH have cautioned the Delta variant of COVID is highly transmissible and local cases are growing.
- We are following the mandate of the governor, which is a legal requirement for school districts, and will be requiring masking for all students and staff who are in the presence of students.
- Wearing masks, for now, is an important mitigation strategy when layered with additional strategies like maintaining distance and getting vaccinated.

Statement:

Thank you for your questions about masking, I understand it can be frustrating when different groups of people are required to do different things. Our utmost concern is for the health and safety of our students and staff. With the increasing number of COVID cases and the highly transmissible Delta variant of COVID, our state superintendent of schools and governor have mandated masks be worn in school when we start in September 2021. This is a requirement for all students and staff who are working where children are present. This is a requirement by law and is not at the discretion of local school boards, local superintendents, or principals.

Wearing masks, for now, is an important mitigation strategy when layered with additional strategies including distancing and vaccinations. If we all work together, we can help stop the spread of COVID in our community and keep our students and families safe and healthy.

Tips:

- If they are persistent in emails, call them and engage directly to help diffuse
- If they want another option, they can visit Everett Virtual Academy for K-8 100% remote

Email response to parent saying they don't want their child to wear a mask:

Dear [Name]

Thank you for bringing your concerns about student masking to my attention. I appreciate your perspective. Requiring students to wear masks in school is a mandate from the WA State Governor and an Order by the State Department of Health which we are required to follow. It is not optional for school districts, and we may not disregard the mandate. Wearing masks is a behavioral expectation at [School Name] for all students and staff. If a student arrives at school without a mask, a mask will be

offered, and your student will be expected to wear the mask while in the school building. It is our obligation as part of following governing mandates and keeping our students and staff safe.

Thank you

Expert for referral and resource for more information:

- Dave Peters
- Kari Johnson
- Current WA DOH fall 2021 school guidelines: [reopening fall 2021](#)
- RCW granting governor the authority: [RCW 43.06.220](#)
- RCW granting State superintendent the authority: [RCW 28A.300.040](#)

