



Family message on masking February 18, 2022

Good afternoon families,

I hope you enjoyed this sunny afternoon and have a great mid-winter break. I have an update from the letter I [sent yesterday](#) about the governor lifting the statewide mask mandate on March 21, and the potential change in masking in our schools. In the letter I stated we were waiting for some clarifications and a look at implications.

Since the governor's press conference, we heard our local health district is not going to impose a mask mandate in Snohomish County, which they can do if they feel it is needed for public health. In addition, the Washington Department of Health is updating their [K-12 guidance](#), which will be completed by March 7, but indications show they will also keep consistent with the governor's announcement.

As a result of this information, Everett Public Schools will be lifting the mask mandate in schools and the district office on March 21. Masks will be optional but recommended.

Currently there are only **three situations for schools that will continue to require masking:**

- On buses: transportation protocols are from a Center for Disease Control (CDC) federal mandate and have not changed at this time.
- If someone who was COVID-positive is returning to work, school or other public settings after a 5-day isolation period, they must wear a well-fitting mask for days 6-10 after their symptom onset or positive test result.
- Anyone who has been exposed to someone with COVID must continue to wear a mask when around others for the full 10 days after exposure.

There are still other changes pending, and we do not have all the answers yet. We are asking for patience and cooperation of staff and parents as we navigate these changes and their impact on our daily operations. Our most immediate consideration includes:

- Students and staff who are medically fragile
- Impact to both the emotional and physical health of reduced layered mitigations for students and staff

Until March 21, masks are still required in Everett Public Schools and must be worn.

Over the next couple of weeks, talk with your family and decide if wearing a mask to school is right for your child. Some families may decide they are done wearing masks all together, others will continue wearing them. We will support you, no matter what you decide. We ask everyone to be respectful and sensitive to the individual needs of our families and staff in this transition. For more information on the masking change, visit our [masking webpage](#).

Respecting Personal Choice

- We are offering personal choice with the expectation that individual choices are respected.
- One should not make assumptions regarding someone's beliefs or health status, nor should they comment on them.
- Be respectful if anyone requests you remain physically distanced from them. We will continue to provide physical distancing to the extent possible in our classrooms until directed otherwise.
- The schools will discuss the change with students in a developmentally appropriate manner, including how to respect everyone's personal choice.

- If your child(ren) expresses any anxiety, please reach out to your school counselors or principal for additional support as needed.

Now, more than ever, it is essential our students and employees adhere to these important health guidelines:

- **Maintain social distancing** in classrooms, learning spaces, hallways and cafeterias to the greatest extent possible.
- **Continue to wash and sanitize** your hands throughout the day.
- **Stay home when you are sick** and watch for [symptoms of COVID](#).

Thank you for all you have done to help us keep a safe, healthy and welcoming learning environment. I am proud of what everyone has done to keep learning a priority while keeping everyone safe.

Stay safe and be well,

Dr. Ian B. Saltzman