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May 26, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), in consultation with the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), recently released updated guidance on mask policy in school buildings. The communication confirms that **schools must continue to implement those universal masking policies in school buildings.**

On Thursday, May 13, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) made the announcement that fully vaccinated individuals may stop wearing face coverings in certain settings. However, the CDC confirmed shortly thereafter that it recommends schools continue to use the current COVID-19 prevention strategies for the 2020-2021 school year. Connecticut's protocols have been updated as well, via Governor Lamont's executive orders, which confirm that the binding guidance issued by the CSDE is mandatory for public school settings.

In outdoor settings, masks are not required, but the CSDE and the DPH recommend continuing mask wearing for students and staff in situations where students and/or staff are outdoors and in close contact while stationary (e.g., sitting/standing together in a group). Where students are actively moving around during recess or physical education activities, masks can be removed. Masks should also be on when going out of the building to recess and back into the building afterward. Good hand hygiene should be emphasized before and after outdoor activities. This change in protocol has been discussed with building principals, who will determine and communicate guidelines for specific upcoming events based on a number of factors, including the density of the gathered group.

We will continue to monitor updated guidance from the CSDE and DPH to inform planning for the summer and next year.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Benigni
Superintendent of Schools

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