



March 31, 2021

Dear Parents,

The Ministry of Education has now updated the [Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#). School Districts are required to follow these specific guidelines. There are a number of updates with the most prominent changes being the introduction of mandatory masks for grades 4-12 at all times when indoors (both within and outside of learning groups) and on the bus, with some exceptions. Overall, we are encouraging the entire K-12 system to wear masks effective immediately as per the announcement on March 29th by Dr. Henry.

In SD60, full implementation for mandatory masking indoors is expected for middle and secondary schools by Tuesday, April 6th. For grades 4-6, the District is preparing educational and material resources for gradual implementation during the week of April 6-9.

Exceptions

The guidance outlined above regarding mask requirements does not apply to staff, students and visitors in the following circumstances:

- to a person who cannot tolerate wearing a mask for health or behavioural reasons;
 - to a person who is unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person;
 - if the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the person wearing it;
 - if the mask is removed temporarily to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (e.g. playing a wind instrument, engaging in high-intensity physical activity, etc.);
 - if a person is eating or drinking;
 - if a person is behind a barrier; or
 - while providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability (including but not limited to a hearing impairment) where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movements is important.
- Schools do not require a health-care provider note (i.e. a doctor's note) to confirm if staff, students or visitors cannot wear a mask. *No student should be prevented from attending or fully participating at school if they do not wear a mask.*

Thank You for your understanding throughout a difficult year. We are the only jurisdiction in Canada that has been able to maintain in-person learning thus far with no extended breaks. Some of you will be pleased with the recent updates while others will be completely opposed. Regardless, your children are welcome in school. With the vaccination rollout underway, we are confident in a more regular start-up for September.

Sincerely,

Stephen Petrucci
Superintendent of Schools