

Face Masks Protocols at COS

On August 31, 2021, Governor Wolf and other state leaders announced an [Order signed by Pennsylvania's Acting Secretary of Health requiring face coverings to be worn in all school entities](#), including school districts and charter schools, effective Tuesday, September 7, 2021.

Circle of Seasons was already following CDC guidance requiring face coverings indoors per the policy that was approved by the Board of Trustees on July 22, 2021. This order does also stipulate that face coverings are not required outdoors. The governor's statewide Order reflects the current statewide data—all 67 counties are reporting high or substantial rates of community transmission of COVID-19—and the fact that our young people represent the largest remaining segment of our population that is unvaccinated, and therefore unprotected from an infectious disease variant that is aggressively spreading. 22 percent of the US COVID cases reported in the third week of August were children.

The COS Face Mask Policy is as follows:

Universal and correct use of masks for all

Conditions:

- f. **Moderate**, Substantial, or High community transmission only
- g. 3-foot physical distancing (6-foot for snack & lunch times)
- h. Maximum ventilation indoors
- i. Cleaning & sanitizing protocols
- j. Handwashing, sanitizing, & respiratory etiquette

In addition masks are also required for all students and adults while riding public school district provided and privately hired **school buses** and vans regardless of level of community transmission.

Under a **Federal order issued in January 2021**, the CDC requires face coverings, regardless of vaccination status, when on public transportation – this includes on school buses operated by public and private school systems. However, a driver does not need to wear a face covering if they are the only person on the bus.

When might mask requirements change?

After we return to **low community transmission** levels for two consecutive weeks, we will follow this protocol as approved at the July 22, 2021 COS Board of Trustees meeting:

As the universal mask mandate was lifted across the state of Pennsylvania as of June 28, 2021, Circle of Seasons students and staff will not be required to wear masks

indoors on campus during low community COVID transmission level. Masks will be optional for all members of our school community. Members of our community can always exercise the option of wearing a mask at any time.

Conditions:

- a. Low community transmission only
- b. 3-foot physical distancing (6-foot for snack & lunch times)
- c. Maximum ventilation indoors
- d. Cleaning & sanitizing protocols
- e. Handwashing, sanitizing, & respiratory etiquette

When indoor classroom activities require sustained closer-than-3-feet proximity, all students and adults will be asked to wear masks. This may occur in circle time, kindergarten cooking, folk dancing, group projects, Games and Movement and for other experiences that bring groups of children together.

We appreciate the cooperation and support of all of our families during this unique time.