



March 11, 2022

Dear Families,

Last week you received a letter regarding the Governor's announcement that the *Universal Masking Mandate* in California schools would end today, March 11, 2022. However, the California Department of Public Health, Cal/OSHA, and San Diego Health and Human Services Agency all state that **masks remain strongly recommended in schools**; and that school Districts should make local decisions based on local factors.

To make a well-informed decision for our path forward, we worked closely with experts from Rady Children's Hospital and considered the following **considerations**:

- San Diego County has been re-classified by the CDC from "high" for community transmission to "low" status; however, COVID-19 case rates remain higher in South County San Diego than in other parts of the County.
- Transmission rates in school settings, where masks have been mandatory, is lower than in other potential COVID-19 exposure settings such as households or community gatherings.
- COVID-19 case rates in San Diego have been decreasing greatly, as they are in National School District; however, 65% of all COVID-19 case rates in National School District occurred in just January and February 2022.
- Vaccination rates of fully vaccinated children in San Diego County is only 26.4% compared to a rate of 74.8% for all ages.
- Input from parents and staff provided compelling arguments for continuing the use of masks, as well as discontinuing or allowing choice for mask wearing.

Based on these factors, we made the following recommendation for mask wearing at school to the Governing Board this week, which the Board supported putting into place **effective this coming Monday, March 14, 2022**:

1. **Beginning March 14, 2022**: Students and adults may remove their masks in all outdoor settings.



2. **Beginning April 11, 2022:** Students and adults may remove their masks while working independently or in small group in an indoor setting. Preschool students will continue to mask in all indoor settings.
3. **For the remainder of 2021-22:** Masks will remain strongly recommended indoors during mixed group activities or larger gatherings (per teacher or principal discretion\*).

\* For example, if a school holds an indoor assembly, masks may be required to attend the event. Likewise, if a teacher engages students in activities that they feel could increase a risk of transmission of COVID-19, masks may be required for that activity. Finally, if COVID-19 cases spike at a school or in a classroom, students may be required to wear masks during times of higher risk of COVID-19 transmission.

As always, students and staff may choose to wear their mask at any time indoor or outdoor. Desk barriers are no longer required in classrooms as there is insufficient data to suggest that they reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Other safety mitigation measures, on the other hand, will remain in effect such as encouraging handwashing and the use of hand sanitizer.

We ask that you continue to monitor your child's symptoms on a daily basis and keep your child home if they are sick. Thank you for your efforts to keep our children and staff safe.

Sincerely,

Dr. Leighangela Brady  
Superintendent