

Chelmsford School Department School Committee

Notice of Public Meeting

Email Posting to townclerk@townofchelmsford.us Thank you.

As required by G.L. c. 30 A, §18-25

DATE: Thursday February 17, 2022 TIME: 6:00 p.m. ROOM: Conf. Room 1

PLACE: CPS Central Administration Office ADDRESS: 230 North Road

The Chelmsford School Committee (CSC) intends to conduct an in-person meeting on the date and time specified. In-person public participation will be *scheduled* to provide social distancing of community members in accordance with the CSC In-Person Public Participation Guidelines. The meeting will be live-streamed by Chelmsford Telemedia for interested community members to access and watch. Interested community members may e-mail Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jay Lang, at langj@chelmsford.k12.ma.us prior to 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday February 16, 2022 to be scheduled to provide in-person input under the public participation portion(s) of the agenda.

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CHAIR OPENING STATEMENT

<u>PUBLIC COMMENTS:</u> The School Committee will hear from members of the public on items listed under New Business on the posted agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Review and Consideration of School Committee Policy EBCFA Face Coverings
- **<u>PUBLIC COMMENTS:</u>** The School Committee will hear from members of the public on general matters of education interest.

ADJOURNMENT

Filed with Town Clerk:



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

Telephone: (781) 338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

Jeffrey C. Riley Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, Assistant Superintendents, Collaborative Leaders, and Leaders of Approved Special Education Schools
Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner
February 9, 2022
Update on DESE Mask Requirement

After consulting with medical experts and state health officials, the Commissioner will not renew the state mask requirement after it expires on February 28, 2022. Effective Monday, February 28, the DESE mask requirement will be lifted statewide. The Commonwealth's high vaccination rates and widespread availability of COVID-19 testing for school personnel and students support this decision.

Masking continues to be required on all school buses, per federal order.

DESE and DPH strongly recommend students and staff continue to follow the <u>DESE-DPH</u> <u>Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios.</u>

As always, any individual who wishes to continue to mask, including those who face higher risk from COVID-19, should be supported in that choice. DESE and DPH strongly recommend unvaccinated individuals should continue to wear masks in school settings.

The Commissioner will continue to monitor public health data, consult with medical experts and state health officials, and issue further guidance and/or requirements as needed.

More than 40 schools have already received approval from DESE to remove the mask requirement. With the removal of the statewide mask requirement, additional schools no longer need to apply.

DESE continues to recommend that districts and schools adopt a layered approach to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in school settings. DESE and DPH continue to strongly urge all eligible individuals to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and booster and continue to support schools with vaccination clinics. Other mitigations include participating in the statewide COVID-19 testing program, maintaining good hand hygiene practices, and staying home when sick.

File: EBCFA - FACE COVERINGS

The Chelmsford Public School District is committed to providing a safe environment as schools reopen during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks or face coverings. Therefore, in accordance with guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice.

A face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in K - 12 school buildings, on school grounds and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed. Exempted from this policy are students in PreSchool and below.

Individuals may be excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons, per CDC guidance:

The individual:

- has trouble breathing;
- is unconscious;
- in incapacitated;
- cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance.

In addition, masks or face coverings will not be required for anyone who has a medical, behavioral or other challenge making it unsafe to wear a face mask or face covering. A written note from a physician is required for a requested exemption. Parents may not excuse their child from the face mask requirement by signing a waiver.

Additionally, face masks or face coverings will not be required when appropriate social distancing is enforced:

- during mask breaks;
- while eating or drinking;
- during physical education classes;
- while outside.

Exceptions to this policy under certain circumstances, such as for students with medical, behavioral or other challenges who are unable to wear masks, must be approved by the building principal in consultation with the school nurse or local Board of Health. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative in some instances.

A student's mask or face covering is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members are responsible for providing their own face coverings. However, the district will supply disposable face coverings for individuals who arrive at a building, or board school transportation, without one.

If students are in violation of this policy, the building principal will consult with the parent/guardians to determine whether an exception is appropriate, or the student may be

removed from the school building for in-person learning until such time as they can comply with the requirement or the requirement is lifted.

Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of School Committee policy.

Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/district facility.

This policy will remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee.

LEGAL REF .: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, COVID-19 Order No. 31 -

https://www.mass.gov/doc/may-1-2020-masks-and-face-coverings/download

REFS.: Center for Disease Control and Prevention - Considerations for Wearing Masks -

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-facecover-guidance.html

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - Reopening Guidelines - <u>http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/</u>

Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Mask Up MA! -

https://www.mass.gov/news/mask-up-ma

SOURCE: MASC - August 2020

Approved: 8/18/2020

FACE COVERINGS

The ______District is committed to providing a safe environment in schools during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Maintaining a safe environment is critical to the District's ability to ensure students remain in a full-time classroom learning environment.

According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks or face coverings. Therefore, in accordance with guidance and recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice.

A face covering that covers the nose and mouth is strongly recommended to be worn by individuals who remain unvaccinated or are otherwise immunocompromised in school buildings, and on school grounds, even when social distancing is observed.

Individuals who are vaccinated are not required to wear a mask, but may do so if desired.

Students and staff returning from 5 day quarantine following a positive COVID test must follow strict mask use, other than when eating, drinking, or outside, and conduct active monitoring for symptoms, through day 10 of exposure.

Masks will be required in all school health offices.

By federal public health order, all students and staff are required to wear a mask on school buses.

Guidance Statements: Massachusetts Department of Public Health

https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-mask-requirements - maskrequirements-in-certain-locationshttps://search.mass.gov/?q=school+health+offices Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools Updated January 13, 2022. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12guidance.html Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – Fall 2021 Covid-19 Guidance Updated February 9, 2022 https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2022-0209mask-requirementupdate.pdf

SOURCE: MASC – February 10, 2022



Face Covering CPS SC Policy

Chelmsford Public Schools February 17, 2022

Timeline

- 8/18/2020 SC Policy EBCFA Face Coverings Approval
- 2/9/2022 Governor Baker and Commissioner Riley's Announcement to Mask/Face Covering Mandate Lift as of 2/28/2022
- 2/17/2021 School Committee Meeting and Action on Current Masking Policy





Current Policy

<u>SC Policy EBCFA</u> – Face Coverings

(To remain in place until rescinded or amended by the Chelmsford School Committee)

- Requires face covering of nose and mouth of all individuals in K-12 buildings, grounds, school transportation.
- Exemptions provided per CDC guidance and other factors including:
 - medical;
 - behavioral;
 - or other challenge making it unsafe to wear.
- Face coverings are not required when socially distanced for:
 - Mask breaks;
 - Eating and drinking;
 - Physical education classes;
 - While outside.

Current Vaccination Rates

School	Rate
Chelmsford High School	86%
McCarthy Middle School	72%
Parker Middle School	69%
Byam Elementary School	58%
Center Elementary School	63%
Harrington Elementary School	53%
South Row Elementary School	57%

Consultation with Health Department and School Physician

- Chelmsford Health Department
 - Continually aligned with the DPH and DESE
 - Support guidelines issued by DESE on masks mandate lift K-12
 - Positivity rate decline town wide and increase in vaccination options
 - Recommend delay in rescinding mask mandate until 3/14 February break
- MA DPH Advisory Update For Indoor Masks Use Outside of Home
 - Vaccinated Individuals Should wear a face covering/mask for personal or family member with weakened immune system, increase risk because of age or underlying medical condition.
 - Unvaccinated Individuals Should wear a face covering/mask to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- COVID-19 positive cases are down at the schools, town, and state-wide.
- Goal is to start planning next phase of COVID-19 to include:
 - Community transmission rates
 - Availability of vaccines
 - COVID-19 testing
- Current data supports:
 - Positive cases in the community and in our district continue to decline
 - The vaccine is widely available in the community and in our school vaccine clinics
 - Weekly Pool Testing and Weekly At-Home Rapid Antigen Testing is available

Continued Mitigation Strategies

- Face coverings required on school buses <u>January</u> <u>29, 2021 Order</u>
- Face coverings required in Health Offices
- Distancing where feasible
- Deep cleaning and additional cleaning at schools
- Distribution of At-Home Antigen Tests
- Continuation with Pool Testing
- Hosting Vaccine Clinics
- Continued messaging and updates
 - COVID-19 Dashboard
 - Pool Testing Dashboard
 - Availability of Vaccination and Booster Clinics
 - Newsletter Messages

Community Decisions

Bordering Towns

- Billerica Lifting Mask Mandate 2/28
- Carlisle Voting Thursday
- Lowell Lifting Mask Mandate 3/7
- Westford Lifting Mask Mandate 3/7
- Tyngsborough Lifting Mask Mandate 2/28

Additional Merrimack Valley Communities

- Andover Voting at March 3rd Meeting
- Bedford Lifting Mask Mandate 2/28
- Burlington Lifting Mask Mandate 2/28
- Dracut Lifting Mask Mandate 2/28
- Tewksbury Lifting Mask Mandate 2/28



School Committee Considerations

SC Policy EBCFA

- 1. Keep/Rescind Current Policy
- 2. Amend Current Policy
- 3. Or adopt MASC Updated Policy: In accordance with guidance and recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice.
 - A face covering that covers the nose and mouth is strongly recommended to be worn by individuals who remain unvaccinated or are otherwise immunocompromised in school buildings, and on school grounds, even when social distancing is observed.
 - Individuals who are vaccinated are not required to wear a mask but may do so if desired.
 - Students and staff returning from 5-day quarantine following a positive COVID test must follow strict mask use, other than when eating, drinking, or outside, and conduct active monitoring for symptoms, through day 10 of exposure.
 - Masks will be required in all school health offices.
 - By federal public health order, all students and staff are required to wear a mask on school buses.