

Bloomsburg Area School District Mask Mandate: Effective August 27, 2021
August 26, 2021

Context

The primary goal of the Bloomsburg Area School District is to provide in-person learning 5-days week with as much normalcy as possible. Today we were notified of two positive Covid cases; One positive case in an elementary classroom and one positive case at our secondary complex. The impact of these positive cases on the number of students who need to quarantine is approaching 40 students at current count, based on Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) and Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) quarantine guidelines. In contrast, two total students would be in quarantine if we required masking indoors.

With this as the basis of our decision, the Bloomsburg Area School District is implementing a mask mandate effective immediately for the following groups:

1. All students in grades K-12 regardless of vaccination status through and including September 7.
2. All unvaccinated faculty and staff through and including September 7.

Enforceability

In order to ensure the greatest likelihood that we will be able to provide in-person instruction 5-days a week, mandatory masking is necessary. Given the high number of students who will need to quarantine based on a total of two verifiable positive cases, we will apply our progressive disciplinary procedures to ensure compliance with our masking mandate.

The school board will revisit this administrative decision at our September 7, 2021 board meeting.

Important Notes

1. Masks are not required outdoors. Mask breaks will be reinstated as required during the 2020-2021 school year.
2. Vaccinated faculty and staff are not mandated to wear masks. These individuals must provide vaccine verification to Stephanie Kessler by 3:00 PM Friday.
 - *Ms. Kessler will provide specific details in a separate message.*
3. Administration will make a recommendation on masking mandates for vaccinated students at the September 7 board meeting.

Summary

We appreciate and acknowledge the many question and concerns regarding mask mandates in schools. Based on our current experience with Covid-19 in our own schools, masking is an important step to comply with quarantine guidelines and keep our kids in-person 5 days a week. We are grateful for the support of our community last year in managing through the pandemic and we look forward to working with you as we navigate our new set of challenges with the delta variant.

We want to provide a special thank you to our faculty, staff and administration for the flexibility and adaptability in these trying and tenuous times. While no one wishes for a restrictive mandates, providing our people with the tools necessary to teach and lead will be our most effective path to a successful 2021-2022 school year.