

Bloomsburg Area School District

Health and Safety Plan Update: Masking

August 2, 2021

Lack of a Mandate: *Context*

- Essential to our ability to navigate masking, social distancing and our virtual calendar in the 2020-2021 school year was the clear mandate on masking from Governor Wolf, and the directive regulations from DOH/PDE on when schools could be open.
- Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, we declined to follow either CDC and DOH/PDE guidance or recommendations, choosing to base our decisions on the mandates and regulations in effect at the time.
- Pennsylvania is a diverse state and our core belief is that federal and state recommendations and guidelines are meant to paint with a broad brush. However, **state mandates and regulations are a compliance priority and the foundation of the development of all of our systems and plans, including our Health and Safety Plan.**

Lack of a Mandate: *Rationale*

- **Given the lack of a mandate from the Governor or DOH/PDE regarding mask mandates, we do not believe that requiring daily mask wearing in our buildings is feasibly enforceable.**
- As we did last year, we will adhere as strictly as we can to any requirements provided to us from the Governor, DOH and/or PDE.
- ***Please Note: Due to Federal mandate, students must be masked on buses.***

Regional Consistency: *Overview*

- The CSIU region consists of 17 school districts and 3 CTE programs. At our last meeting and in our running notes only one of the 17 districts has stated plans to require masks for students under the age of 12.
- Our next regional Superintendent meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 4, with local health leaders scheduled to attend to provide additional information for our consideration.
- **When combined with the lack of a mandate as noted, we believe it is most appropriate to align with our regional peers.**
 - *Should our regional peers begin to change course, we will be active participants in the conversation and dialogue. That said, we really do believe it is a responsibility of DOH/PDE to drive the mandate/requirement process.*

Our Local Experience

- Today (8/2/2021), we are 3 weeks from the first day of school for the 2021-2022 school year. Currently, we do not believe we have the necessary elements to implement and/or recommend a local mask mandate.

We would need:

- Federal, State, or County level regulations or mandates requiring masking in our schools.
 - A specific local event or issue.
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- **Should our local conditions change suddenly, without federal or state mandates, we may plan to recommend returning to the core elements of our 2020-2021 Health and Safety Plan.**

On the Horizon

Southern State Schools Opening Next Week: Schools in several Southern States that are not allowed to mandate masks open next week. These schools will provide an opportunity to review the benefits and drawbacks of voluntary masking before we open for students on August 23.

- ***Should there be significant outbreaks in Southern State Schools, we have to believe that our state leaders will provide direction for schools here in Pennsylvania.***

CSIU Regional Superintendent Meetings: Beyond our regional Superintendent meeting on Wednesday, we will continue to meet regularly as a whole group and in small sub regional groups as necessary and appropriate to navigate the next three weeks to the start of the school year.

Looking Ahead

Proof of Vaccination: As we as a nation move closer to the Pfizer vaccine receiving full FDA authorization and as private businesses implement proof of vaccination status, it is likely that our local, regional, state conversation will shift to discussions of including Covid-19 as a required Pennsylvania vaccination.

- Currently, we have no plans to begin collecting or verifying vaccination status for teachers or for students.
- **Faculty, staff and parents of students over 12 might want to pay attention to the national and state level conversation and the impact that vaccination status may have on the ability to access various venues and services.**

SCHOOL VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ATTENDANCE IN PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOLS

FOR ATTENDANCE IN ALL GRADES CHILDREN NEED THE FOLLOWING:



- 4 doses of tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis* (1 dose on or after the 4th birthday)
 - 4 doses of polio (4th dose on or after 4th birthday and at least 6 months after previous dose given)**
 - 2 doses of measles, mumps, rubella***
 - 3 doses of hepatitis B
 - 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) or evidence of immunity
- *Usually given as DTP or DTaP or if medically advisable, DT or Td*
*** A fourth dose is not necessary if the third dose was administered at age 4 years or older and at least 6 months after the previous dose*
****Usually given as MMR*



ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL, unless the child has a medical or religious/philosophical exemption, a child must have had at least one dose of the above vaccinations or risk exclusion.

- If a child does not have all the doses listed above, needs additional doses, and the next dose is medically appropriate, the child must receive that dose within the first five days of school or risk exclusion. If the next dose is not the final dose of the series, the child must also provide a medical plan (red and white card) within the first five days of school for obtaining the required immunizations or risk exclusion.
- If a child does not have all the doses listed above, needs additional doses, and the next dose is not medically appropriate, the child must provide a medical plan (red and white card) within the first five days of school for obtaining the required immunizations or risk exclusion.
- The medical plan must be followed or risk exclusion.

FOR ATTENDANCE IN 7TH GRADE:

- 1 dose of tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis (Tdap) on the first day of 7th grade.
- 1 dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV) on the first day of 7th grade.

ON THE FIRST DAY OF 7TH GRADE, unless the child has a medical or religious/philosophical exemption, a child must have had the above vaccines or risk exclusion.

FOR ATTENDANCE IN 12TH GRADE:

- 1 dose of MCV on the first day of 12th grade. If one dose was given at 16 years of age or older, that shall count as the twelfth grade dose.

ON THE FIRST DAY OF 12TH GRADE, unless the child has a medical or religious/philosophical exemption, a child must have had the above vaccines or risk exclusion.

The vaccines required for entrance, 7th grade and 12th grade continue to be required in each succeeding school year.

These requirements allow for the following exemptions: medical reason, religious belief, or philosophical/strong moral or ethical conviction. Even if your child is exempt from immunizations, he or she may be excluded from school during an outbreak of vaccine preventable disease.

Key Point Summary

- State mandates and regulations are a compliance priority and the foundation of the development of all of our systems and plans, including our Health and Safety Plan.
- Given the lack of a mandate from the Governor or DOH/PDE regarding mask mandates, we do not believe that requiring daily mask wearing in our buildings is feasibly enforceable.
- When combined with the lack of a mandate as noted, we believe it is most appropriate to align with our regional peers.
- Should our local conditions change suddenly, without federal or state mandates, we may recommend returning to the core elements of our 2020-2021 Health and Safety Plan.
- Should there be significant outbreaks in Southern State Schools, we have to believe that our state leaders will provide direction for schools here in Pennsylvania.
- Faculty, staff and parents of students over 12 might want to pay attention to the national and state level conversation and the impact that vaccination status may have on the ability to access various venues and services.