



March 10, 2022

## **Superintendent's Message: Indoor Masks Move to Strongly Recommended for TK-12**

Dear Parents, Guardians, Staff, Students and Community Members,

The SMMUSD Board of Education took action to amend two board resolutions outlining COVID-19 safety protocols to move the indoor masking protocol for TK-12 from required to strongly recommended, in alignment with state and county guidance, effective Monday, March 14, 2022. The school board voted unanimously at a special board meeting on March 9, 2022, to amend resolutions Nos. 21-01 and 21-02 adopted originally in August 2021 to effectuate this change.

In keeping with our District's practice to uphold our county's mandates and guidance, and with the support of our Board of Education, we have amended our indoor masking protocols for staff and students as follows:

- This change is effective Monday, March 14, 2022, in SMMUSD for TK-12. The first day of in-class instruction with strongly recommended, but not required, masking is Monday, March 14, 2022.
- Preschool families, please expect written communication from our CDS department regarding any upcoming changes.
- This change applies to both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.
- Staff is required to follow the requirements of Cal/OSHA, which has also aligned with the state and county public health masking guidance; therefore, masks for staff will also move from required to strongly recommended on March 14, 2022.

Both state and county guidance emphasize that masks continue to be strongly recommended; therefore, we recognize and support the continued wearing of masks for students, staff, and visitors who choose to do so.

With this change, it is important for parents and students to discuss their family's expectations for mask wearing at school. We ask for your partnership in reminding students to respect the choices of others, even when they differ from their own. No student or staff member should endure criticism or mistreatment for their choice to wear or not wear a mask at school, and such behavior will not be tolerated. Bullying will not be tolerated. We encourage students to be sensitive to classmates with underlying health issues. We need to always take care of ourselves and each other.

Please note that students who begin to exhibit symptoms while on campus will be sent to the health office and given a face mask to wear while they await pick-up from parent/guardian.

If the LACDPH updates their quarantine and/or isolation protocols in response to the indoor masking change, they will post those updates later this week, and we will align our protocols accordingly.

### **Updates and reminders:**

- We will continue weekly testing of staff and students at our schools / offices.
- We will continue to track reported positive cases and provide weekly updates to our [Covid Dashboard](#).
- If your student or a staff member exhibits COVID-related symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, please continue to have them stay home and follow current isolation protocols.
- Our testing hubs for symptomatic students and staff at John Adams Middle School and Malibu Elementary School continue on school days. [See schedule](#).
- Students exposed to a COVID positive person at school will continue to follow quarantine protocols.
- Antigen tests will be distributed prior to spring break for students and staff to self test the morning of April 18 and bring in the test stick showing a negative result for entry to school. Parents and staff will receive a letter with more information prior to spring break.

It is important to remember that changes to mask policy do not signal an end to the COVID-19 pandemic. Cases are declining to near pre-surge levels everywhere, and this is the right time to move face masking guidance from required to strongly recommended in most settings. We want to remind everyone that any new surge that threatens public health and the lives of vulnerable residents may call for quick and assertive action and a new requirement to mask.

To that end, let us all recommit to practicing the mitigation measures of frequent hand washing, use of hand sanitizer, and staying home when sick to help ensure our students, staff, families, and community members continue to keep the spread of COVID-19 on the decline.

### **Independent Study Program**

The Independent Study Program option provides a voluntary alternative instructional model for students whose health may be at risk as determined by the student's legal guardian by participating in in-person instruction. Independent study is a voluntary program in which students follow a self-paced curriculum from home with parental support.

If you prefer to enroll your student in our independent study program, contact your school principal/administrator. If you have a child/ren at the the middle or high school level, a conversation can be held with the counselor/advisor regarding your interest/decision to enroll your student in our independent study program. For more information, please contact Mr. Isaac Burgess IV, Director Malibu Pathway at [iburgess@smmusd.org](mailto:iburgess@smmusd.org), or Mr. Anthony Fuller, Principal Olympic High/Independent Study Administrator at [afuller@smmusd.org](mailto:afuller@smmusd.org) .

Thank you for your ongoing partnership and support as we transition into a new phase of living and learning with COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent

## **Additional information:**

### **Survey Data**

We received 5,162 responses to our indoor masking survey. We appreciate staff, parents and students who took the survey. My presentation to the Board of Education at the special board meeting reflects the opinions of a broad cross section of our stakeholders. [See the presentation with survey data](#). We appreciate your input and comments.

### **Health symposium recording**

Our health symposium webinar held on March 7, 2022, provided our parents and staff with important medical information and data from the state and county that has led to this decision to no longer require masks. [You may watch the recorded webinar here.](#)

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