



Conestoga Valley School District
2110 Horseshoe Road
Lancaster, PA 17601



September 2, 2021

CV Community –

We understand that we are all tired of COVID and the negative impact that it has had on our individual, family and community lives. There are virtually limitless opinions on the best way to address the pandemic – mask/no mask; vaccinate/no vaccinate; social distance/no social distance; quarantine/no quarantine; and every combination imaginable.

The School Board passed a Health and Safety Plan on July 19, 2021. Within the Plan was the flexibility to work within the recommendations of the Department of Health (DOH), Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). The plan includes the direct statement that “CVSD will adhere to any existing, valid and binding orders from the PA DOH/PDE/CDC regarding facial coverings.”

We understand that some people may question the legality of the Order of the Secretary of Health. The question over whether or not her actions are, or are not, lawful is for the courts, not for the local school boards and administration. Our local legislators have the opportunity to address the concerns of our community either through the legislative or judicial process.

The recent Order by the Secretary of Health issued on August 31, 2021, mandates the following (as applicable to CV):

- Each teacher, child/student, staff, or visitor working, attending, or visiting a School Entity shall wear a face covering indoors, regardless of vaccination status.
 - Exceptions to the mandate include:
 - If wearing a face covering would either cause a medical condition, or exacerbate an existing one, including respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition or a disability. (Similar to last year, parents who request an exemption can visit the school’s main office to pick up the necessary forms that start the process that requires a medical doctor’s involvement.)
 - When working alone and isolated from interaction with other people with little or no expectation of in-person interaction.
 - If an individual is communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired or has another disability, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
 - When eating or drinking or playing an instrument.

- When participating in high intensity aerobic or anerobic activities, including during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals.
- When a child/student is participating in a sports practice activity or event, whether indoors or outdoors.

As this masking mandate applies to us, please keep in mind the following. We worked VERY hard last year to keep our schools open five days a week during the entire 2020/2021 school year. We were one of a handful of districts that accomplished that goal; conversely, over 60% of schools across the Commonwealth were mostly or entirely virtual. The way that we stayed opened for the entire school year was that we wore masks, socially distanced, and effectively contact traced. We need to continue this momentum of keeping our children in school.

The only changes to our protocol since we opened just 8 days ago are:

- Masks will continue to be mandatory on busses, and effective Tuesday, September 7, 2021, will be mandatory inside school buildings, and
- Contact tracing distances shrink from 6 feet to 3 feet, thereby reducing the number of close contacts identified.

We know that not everyone agrees with the Secretary of Health's Order. At this point, unless a court takes action, the terms of the Order are considered lawful, and we will comply as such. Parents do have the option to have their children attend school for in-person instruction as long as the students wear a mask, or parents also have the option to have their children not wear a mask and learn at home through our CV Virtual Academy (CVVA). If you consider the CVVA option, please contact your building principal (and/or special education administrator as applicable), who will help you through the enrollment process.

Patience, grace, flexibility and understanding. How we react to this pandemic as parents, educators and community will be closely watched by our children. Thank you to all parents and educators for being involved in our children's education and for making a positive difference in their lives.



Dave Zuilkoski, EdD
Superintendent